



Hedayah
Countering Extremism
& Violent Extremism

IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND STRENGTHS

*A Practitioners Manual on Client
Engagement: from Trust Building
to Resilient Behavior*





Hedayah

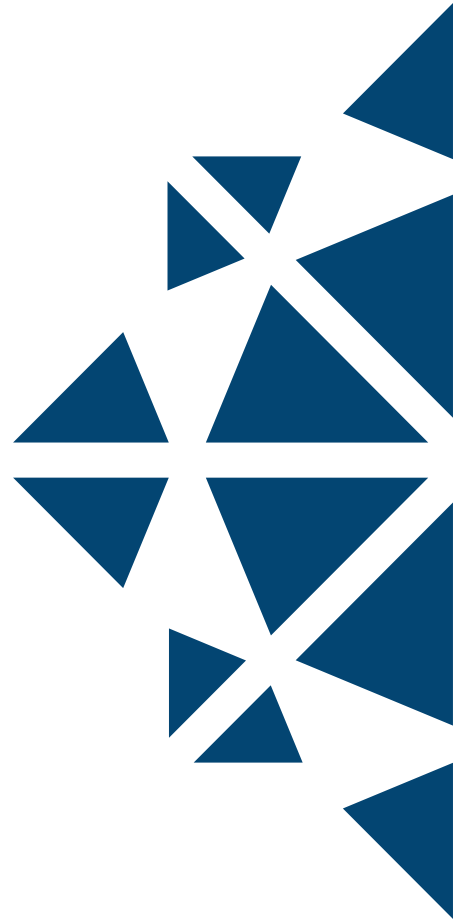
Countering Extremism
& Violent Extremism

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ABOUT HEDAYAH

Hedayah was created in response to a growing desire from the international community and members of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) representing 29 countries and the European Union to establish an independent, multilateral ‘think and do’ tank devoted to countering extremism and violent extremism. Since its inception, Hedayah has evolved into a passionate, driven and international organization that brings together a vast network of unparalleled experts and practitioners to counter and prevent extremism & violent extremism. Twelve members of the GCTF are representatives of our diverse Steering Board, which provides strategic oversight. As the International Center of Excellence for Countering Extremism and Violent Extremism, we are committed to innovation, neutrality, integrity, diversity and technical excellence by delivering groundbreaking research, innovative methodologies and programs. Our approach is to deliver real and sustainable impact to governments, civil society and people impacted by extremism and violent extremism through local ownership and collaboration.



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ABOUT THIS MANUAL

Personal needs shape individuals' life and can lead to the adoption of either resilient or dysfunctional behaviors, depending on the individual's circumstance, social environment and opportunity. In this context, extremist and/or violent extremist groups worldwide have already demonstrated their ability in adopting effective recruitment strategies, by identifying and meeting vulnerable individuals' needs. Some of these needs include, for instance, "seeking personal identity and belonging", "seeking financial stability", "seeking meaningful friendship". By providing tailored narratives, extremist and/or violent extremist groups proved to be capable of meeting the needs of vulnerable individuals by offering simplified, radicalizing and galvanizing narratives. In order to counter the appeal of these narratives, it is paramount for practitioners to offer adequate solutions and alternatives, as opposed to those offered by these groups. To do so, practitioners need to adopt appropriate trust-building and information-gathering approaches and categorize their clients' critical needs and strengths. In turn, this would inform evidence-based preventive as well as rehabilitation & reintegration interventions, thus nullifying the appeal of extremist alternatives. In this context, Hedayah developed the present manual, which stands as an innovative and practical resource in the field of countering extremism and violent extremism.

This manual follows the publication of Hedayah's "*Blueprint of a Rehabilitation and Reintegration Center- Guiding Principles for Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Family Members*" and represents a concrete operational tool for practitioners. Notably, it draws considerations on how practitioners can successfully assess and handle relationships with individuals who may be potentially or actually involved in extremism and/or violent extremism. It does not focus on one specific type of "extremism" and can be applied widely. While it can be a useful resource, it does not present itself as the "ultimate response" to the challenge of assessing and handling individuals affected by extremism and/or violent extremism. In fact, the debate on how to assess, screen and categorize these individuals' needs is still very much ongoing and there are no final solutions for it yet. In this context, the limitation of this manual is also that it does not represent a validated assessment tool. Instead, it offers guidance, practices and templates with the aim to support practitioners in further contextualization and validation, according to their own context of reference.

Finally, while the distinction between clinical and non-clinical practitioners may often be blurred, this manual is primarily meant for non-clinical practitioners, in a counseling setting (e.g. social workers, mentors, educators). These are practitioners who may not possess extensive expertise in sophisticated assessments, but are nonetheless involved in information-gathering and evaluation of clients in their care. This manual does not provide specific guidance on interventions. However, it offers guidance in the form of recommendations and international good practices to assist in the process of engaging with cases of actual or potential violent extremism, and planning for potential interventions. It adopts a *multi-disciplinary approach*, aiming to combine approaches, tools and theories from psychology, sociology, criminology and other related fields. In the context of this manual, all the individuals engaged by and/or in the care of a practitioner are referred to as "clients".

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

The manual is divided into two main sections:

- 1. The Theoretical Foundation of this Manual.** This section provides the foundations in literature and gives a brief overview of the main areas of investigation (i.e. Domains) for a practitioner, when engaging a client. This section is meant as a basis to understand the theory and the key concepts behind the *Needs and Strengths Assessment* process.
- 2. The Manual in Practice.** This Section is meant for non-clinical practitioners (e.g. social workers, educators, mentors) and aims to provide guidance, techniques and templates based on a 4-step process, in order to effectively engage the client and perform an individual-focused *Needs and Strengths Assessment*.

SECTIONS OF THE MANUAL: AN OVERVIEW

- 1. The Theoretical Foundation of this Manual** will include:
 - ▶ An Introduction
 - ▶ The theoretical foundation, which highlights the need for adopting a needs- focused approach as opposed to a risk-focused one.
 - ▶ The available theories from which the manual takes inspiration:
 - ▶ The Risk Need Responsivity Model;
 - ▶ The Significant Quest Theory;
 - ▶ The Good Lives Models;
 - ▶ Salutogenesis;
 - ▶ Ecological Approach to Human Development and Socialization;
 - ▶ Moral Ecology of Extremism.
 - ▶ Hedayah’s approach on needs-assessment, which is based on:
 - ▶ A needs-centric methodology;
 - ▶ The principle “just enough, just in time, just for you”;
 - ▶ The ecological model;
 - ▶ Context sensitivity;
 - ▶ Non-clinical focus;
 - ▶ Ethical principles;
 - ▶ A client-led process.
 - ▶ An overall description of the Five Domains and the “Coding Sheet” that will be part of the manual.
 - ▶ The available social diagnostic tools and cognitive approaches that will be presented when relevant in the manual, to include the *Reflexive Lifeline Tool*, the *Social Network Map*, the *Socratic Dialogue*, *Motivational Interviewing technique*, and the *Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method* (BNIM).
 - ▶ An overview of the relevant protective factors that would need to inform the final assessment.
- 2. The Manual in Practice** will provide:
 - ▶ Guidelines and Principles on how to build trust and collect information.
 - ▶ The Four Steps of an information-gathering and *Needs and Strengths Assessment process*.
 - ▶ The Five Domains: guiding topics to explore with the client, per each Domain.
 - ▶ Instructions and templates for the Coding Sheet, per each Domain.
 - ▶ Instructions and a template for the final *Needs and Strengths Assessment*.



GLOSSARY

The following terms will appear in this manual.

ACTUARIAL RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS (ARAI):

These are structured tests used to determine if an individual is likely to engage in violence in the future. The determination is based on existing data, whereby measures are developed and mathematically determined.

ANTI-SOCIAL:

Deviant activities and goals that go against the collective interest of the society and also have the potential for disrupting the social order or social cohesion. In other words, anti-social activities can be goals that, if pursued, might have negative effects on society (even unintended negative effects), like criminal activities, and radicalization.¹

BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE INTERPRETIVE METHOD (BNIM):

This method helps individuals to remember and recall particular experiences defined as *Particular Incident Narratives* (PINI). Such information is gathered through the use of questions focused on events rather than feelings to ensure we gather actual information on the experiences.

CLIENT:

In the context of this manual, a client refers to an individual who is in the care of a social practitioner and who may be potentially vulnerable to anti-social behaviors (including extremism and violent extremism), or may be in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration

CLINICAL:

Related to the observation, engagement and/or treatment of actual clients rather than theoretical or laboratory/field studies. Clinical work often results in the development of a diagnosis that may or may not require treatment/medical intervention.

COMMUNITY:

Community refers to women, men, social groups and institutions that are based in the same area and/or have shared interests.²

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE:

Refers to the community's ability to withstand and recover from adverse situations such as natural catastrophes, war, social tensions and economic collapse. Community resilience is seen as a *dynamic factor* (a factor that can be changed as opposed to static factors) that can be strengthened through different interventions. It includes cultural values, language, customs and norms that can help a community and its individual members overcome adversity.

COPING STRATEGIES:

Methods used by individuals to cope with stressful and adversarial events in life. They can be both functional and dysfunctional. Anger, violence, drug use and suicide are examples of *dysfunctional* strategies. Activities to relieve stress that does not harm the individual or the society such as mindfulness exercises, integrating different perspectives or taking into account another persons' perspective in a conflict (instead of resorting to anger) are examples of functional coping strategies.

CREDIBLE MESSENGERS:

Someone who has a certain level of trustworthiness and authenticity within a community or group.

CRITICAL NEEDS:

(Read the definition of need): the needs that have been prioritized and identified as the ones that have the highest potential for shaping the individual's course in life.

DEVIANCE:

It refers to behaviour that departs from social norms. It is dependent on the context of the behaviour. Deviance may include crime and offense, although very common violations might not be considered criminal.

DOMAINS:

Areas of relevance in the client's life that refer to his/her attitudes, behaviors, skills and resources and that are generally considered of universal importance in life. The Domains are also the areas of relevance that practitioners should investigate, in order to ascertain whether there are "needs" and/or "protective factors" in the client's life. For the purpose of this manual, the Domains refer to : 1) Personal Goals and/or Interests, 2) History/Biography; 3) Individual Skills and Competencies; 4) Family and Friends (Primary Group); 5) Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context

DYNAMIC FACTORS:

Factors that can be influenced and changed as opposed to *static factors*.

DYSFUNCTIONAL:

A term that describes behaviors that go against the individuals' best interest, desired conditions within the society, and can also indicate behaviors that go against the collective interest of the society (anti-social); this may include deviant behaviors such as violence, drug use and criminality.

EPISTEMIC TRUST:

Trust in the authenticity and relevance of shared knowledge. In essence, this entails an individual's willingness to consider newly-acquired knowledge as relevant, credible, and worth integrating into his/her lives.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS:

These comprise several functions associated with controlling one's life, such as self-control, coping strategies, problem-solving ability, ability to focus and planning abilities to reach personal goals. Mobilizing or enhancing executive functions may be part of an individual's coping strategies against adversarial events in life, including exposure to trauma, extremist ideologies and/or violence.

FUNCTIONAL:

A term that relates to behaviors that are in line with the individual's and/or society's best interest. This is usually defined by the individual himself/herself in terms of his/her pro-social aspirations and goals, and ways to achieve those in a given social context.

GOOD LIVES MODEL (GLM):

A rehabilitation model for convicted criminals developed by psychologists Tony Ward and Shadd Maruna. Instead of focusing on risk factors predictive of recidivism, their approach is focused on reinforcing strengths and providing skills that are critical in the individual's development towards a more pro-social life.

GROUP DYNAMICS:

The interactions between several members within a social group and the interactions between several social groups that shape the members' and the groups' attitudes and behaviors.

GROUPS: PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY.

These terms denote different social groups that are important for a specific individual. The *primary group* encompasses individuals that have extremely close relationships with the individual. This may include close family members or friends. A *secondary group* is a group with whom the individual interacts on a less personal level, like his or her colleagues, peers or a community group of some sort. A *tertiary group* is a group that serves as a role model and may be influential in shaping an individual's attitude or behavior.

INTERPERSONAL TRUST:

It is defined as a "generalized expectancy held by an individual that the word, promise, oral or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on"³.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION:

It refers to the motivation that comes from the inner satisfaction of doing things that are specifically rewarding to the individual as opposed to doing things that please others.

JUST ENOUGH, JUST IN TIME, JUST FOR YOU:

An approach that encourages practitioners to seek and use the available evidence at the present time in their engagement with clients, rather than hypothesizing about the future and focusing on the client's potential predictors of violence extremism and violent extremism.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING:

It entails a fluid conversation which aims at investigating the client's thought process. This approach is also action-oriented in that it guides the client to develop a vision for behavioral change and can be used for information-gathering purposes but also as part of an intervention itself. It also promotes a fully collaborative approach with the client, based on the OARS Model (Open Ended Questions; Affirmations; Reflections; Summaries)

NEEDS:

Those personal necessities that are at the core of individual behavior. Individual "needs" differ from individual "wants"; a "need" relates to what a client potentially lacks in order to live his/her life in a functional and/or pro-social manner. Needs are captured by a practitioner through an assessment of the client's attitudes, resources, skills and behaviors across the five Domains of investigation

NEEDS AND STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT:

Holistic analysis and assessment of the client's needs and protective factors, with the aim to identify the critical needs which will be the focus of the intervention

NON-CLINICAL:

It usually does not result in a specific and objective diagnosis but does not preclude engagement, interaction with and analysis of individuals in a counselling-setting or social-work setting.

PERSONAL RESILIENCE:

The ability of an individual to adjust to adversity, maintain equilibrium, retain some sense of control over their environment, and continue to move on in a positive manner⁴.

PRO-SOCIAL:

Pro-social activities and goals refer to activities and goals that are supported and promoted by the majority of the society and that are functional to the well-being of the society, and/or the individual within the society. It is important to note that not all pro-social activities are sufficient for distancing an individual from extremism and violent extremism. A careful analysis of what pro-social activities should be promoted in the individual's case is crucial.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

Individual traits, skills, goals as well as environmental factors around an individual that can provide a fertile ground for the development of pro-social and functional behaviors and can counter the surge of dysfunctional and anti-social behaviors. Protective factors are captured by a practitioner through the assessment of the client's skills, resources, attitudes and behaviors across the five Domains of Investigation.

**RADICALIZATION
LEADING
TO VIOLENT
EXTREMISM:**

The process by which individuals increasingly adopt violent means to pursue ideological objectives. Radicalization in itself can be qualified as a deviant process in that it departs from specific social norms in a given context and may result in anti-social behaviors (e.g. criminality, extremism and violent extremism).

**REFLEXIVE
LIFELINE:**

A social work tool that enables a reflection process within the client's biography. The methodology requires for the client to draw a horizontal line- representing his/ her own life timeline- and identify the different points in time, when meaningful events occurred. This may include positive experiences as well as negative ones.

RISK:

Individual's likelihood in partaking in anti-social behaviors (including extremism and violent extremism). Traditional risk-assessment models for violent extremists also look at the specific risk for further radicalization or risk of re-offending and re-engaging in a violent extremist groups. This manual does not focus on the traditional definition of risk and instead postulates that a risk may be considered as a critical need that has not been met by society.

**SOCRATIC
DIALOGUE:**

A cognitive methodology primarily aimed to teach both philosophy and ethics, which has been advocated as a basis for enabling 'problem-solving' and enhancing effective thinking about life. As a counselling method, it differs considerably from existing approaches as it does not aim to investigate the individual's issue or problem, but rather the individual's perspective on a fundamental question and/ or topic.

SKILLS:

Skills describe the means used by an individual to fulfill his/her needs. It can be said that an individual that lacks specific skills such as *coping strategies* may be more at risk for developing *anti-social or dysfunctional behaviors* . Therefore, strengthening an individual's skills is crucial in any intervention.

**SOCIAL
CATEGORIZATION:**

The human tendency of categorizing people into social groups based on different characteristics like skin color, nationality, age, different physical traits, and employment status. This tendency is native in all humans and is also a phenomenon widely exploited by extremist and violent extremist groups as a tactic to fuel tensions between different groups of individuals, often by reinforcing the perceived negative aspects of another group.

SOCIAL MARKERS:

Attributes that signal group belonging. These range from clothing, accessories, language, specific words, values, opinions, etc. Social markers may be important signs to look for when interacting with an individual, as they may tell you a lot about the individual's affiliation with different groups.

**SOCIAL NETWORK
MAP:**

A social work tool rooted in network theory which allows the client to identify his/ her position in relation to his/her available networks and groups of reference.

STATIC FACTORS:

Static factors are aspects, both individual and contextual, that are fixed and not possible to alter, like historical events, and an individual's past experiences.

**STRUCTURED
PROFESSIONAL
JUDGEMENT (SPJ).**

An assessment method where the practitioner uses structured paper-based tests in combination with his/her own professional judgement.

**UNSTRUCTURED
CLINICAL
JUDGEMENT (UCJ):**

An assessment method where the practitioner relies solely on his/her own professional judgement without any structured instruments to guide him or her.

**VIOLENT
EXTREMISM:**

The final stage of the radicalization process which consists of the active pursuit of ideological objectives through violent means.



INTRODUCTION

Radicalization is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that can best be described as non-linear⁵. This refers to the idea that there are multiple pathways to the same outcome and that there is no automatic progression. Specifically, we know that there is no specific process or pathway that determines an individual's involvement in extremism or violent extremism; in fact, radicalization occurs as a result of the interaction of macro-level and individual-level factors⁶. The latter factors may greatly vary depending on each individual's circumstances at the time of radicalization or recruitment.

Focusing on attempting to identify these factors and use this knowledge in some form of predictive manner may be challenging from an empirical perspective. Instead, focusing on the interaction between the context, the individual's behavior and his/her cognitive skills may be more easily achievable and represents a starting point to inform a pragmatic and realistic response. This approach is based on multidisciplinary and is rooted in existing bodies of work in psychology (the study of behavior), criminology (the study of crime) and sociology (the study of society). For instance, sociological approaches stress the importance of analyzing the individual and his/her context to "provide a reliable, methodically and empirically sound (data) basis for (decisions regarding) interventions"⁷. This approach differs from those that are based on predictive values, and instead promotes individual-focused interventions that are based on the data and information available in the present time and within the client's context and groups of reference.

In addition, a key concept from sociology is called *Deviance*. Since Durkheim's theory⁸, *Deviance* has been widely researched and generally defined as the violation of social norms. This may include criminal behavior but it may also refer to the violation of cultural expectations. An individual involved in extremism can be readily interpreted as *Deviance*, both because it usually involves criminal behavior and because it may involve the violation of familial, cultural and religious norms. In this context, it is important to note that extremism may be an educational, familial, or youth development issue. This does not exclude however that it may also occur in tandem with other psychological problems. In addition, dealing with an individual involved in extremism and/or violent extremism very

often means dealing with the individual's family and social networks. This means that we need to expand our focus to not only look at radicalization and extremist and/or violent extremist acts, but also consider the broader social, familial, economic and global influences on the individual. In practice, we need to lengthen our view beyond the short-term focus and also take a life-span (whole of life) and family-systems (where the family is seen as one emotional unit) approach to understanding radicalization, extremism and/or violent extremism.

It is also important to note that there is no multifaceted comprehensive assessment method and/or checklist available for accurately identifying individuals who are at risk of involvement in extremism, violent extremism or recidivism into violent extremism. On this point, existing risk assessment tools for radicalization, extremism and/or violent extremism may not have sufficient empirical evidence, partly because of the lack of access to data from criminal justice settings, which prevents to have a holistic vision on clear predictors of re-engagement in extremism and/or violent extremism. What does exist and what is useful in these cases is to draw on the wealth of experience from clinical and non-clinical practitioners who deal with individuals engaged in a range of deviant and anti-social behaviors and consider how we might best use this to understand and handle individuals we will assist.

In this context, it is important to introduce an important difference: clinical practitioners are primarily in charge of developing a diagnosis and determine the best type of clinical therapeutic responses. This may be based on interviews and direct engagements with the individuals and on resorting to a set of objective indicators and validated tools. Non-clinical practitioners instead can support the client in identifying the best course of action, typically in a counselling setting. This manual aims to provide a general guidance for multiple audiences and can be adapted to account for local circumstances and inform both clinical and non-clinical planning and engagement. However, this manual is primarily meant to be used in a counseling setting and as such, it represents a useful tool for non-clinical practitioners and those practitioners (e.g. social workers, educators, mentors) who are not experienced in clinical approaches.



THE

**THEORETICAL
FOUNDATION
OF THIS
MANUAL**

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: HUMAN BEHAVIOR, NEEDS AND ENVIRONMENT

Identifying the individual's needs in relation to his/her bio-psycho-social environment is paramount to understand human behavior and build effective preventive and/or rehabilitative interventions.

There are several theories that attempt to explain why people behave in a particular manner. We can consider the idea of *motivations* (both personal and contextual) that spur individuals to act, we can consider the process of how people came to be in a position to carry out a behavior (opportunity), we can consider why they halted that behavior (desistance), we can consider the structures and the resources available that frame the ways people behave (social identity, economic factors, racism, ethnic marginalization, etc.), and we can consider the function of the behavior (what needs are being met). All of these theories are relevant when attempting to understand actions and the cognitions that underpin behavior.

In terms of human behavior, what does it mean to speak about extremism & violent extremism, or equally, what does it mean when we speak about criminal behavior or more broadly the violation of social norms? At the fringe of such behavior, we are talking about individuals who put their lives and the lives of others in harm at the expense of intense physical and mental/emotional demands. This is not a process that is unique to extremism, violent extremism, nor criminality, but it is a marker of human behavior. We routinely see individuals take risks and engage in extreme behavior, whether this is via extreme sports, drug taking, etc.

However, the reality of extremism, violent extremism, criminality, and deviance more broadly is that the level of risk taken by individuals may actually be low. Involvement in extremism and violent extremism does not imply that individuals may commit violent actions in the traditional sense; and in fact individuals may engage in *supporting roles*. In these latter cases we

may be talking about “low level deviance”. At the same time, any engagement in extremism is risky in a legal sense given that many of the support behaviors are criminalized (e.g. online support, relaying vital information, informants, fundraising, etc.).

While being extreme and being an extremist and/or violent extremist are clearly different concepts, it is also useful to consider how instances of extreme behaviors impact on individuals, as this may also clarify certain dynamics pertaining to violent extremism. Barrett and Martin (2014) document extreme behaviors in their volume entitled *Extreme*⁹. They examine cases such as Antarctic expedition, mountain climbing, space exploration; and point out the significant psychological impact on the individuals engaging in extreme behavior. They refer to the need to overcome fear, cope with anxiety, deal with the emotional highs and lows, the need to be adaptable, etc. Stress is noted as a key issue for individuals in extreme environments. While not all of the individuals who choose violent extremism are in an extreme environment (e.g. conflict zones), if they are active in their home country, being involved with clandestine groups/networks and engaging in the planning of illegal acts is extreme in itself. Given the psychological impact of both acute and chronic stress, it is reasonable to assume that engaging in this extreme behavior must confer some positive benefit to the individual; it must be meeting some needs. For example, this may include the need to feel included and being part of a group; or the need to secure a “higher status” in the afterlife as the present appears hopeless.

The importance of fulfilling personal needs as a key motivator or driver of behavior is not a new concept. In the middle of the last century, a motivational theory called the *Hierarchy of Needs* was outlined. The model organizes human needs into levels in a hierarchical structure; and in order to get from the lower level to the higher level you must progress through each category of need¹⁰. While this model is empirically unsupported, the idea of needs being ranked in terms of personal importance has been widely influential.¹¹ For example, scholars developed an approach that focuses on motivational imbalance – the process by which a particular need comes to dominate all others, thus triggering behaviors that seek to meet that need¹².

In this context, it is important to clarify that extreme behavior should also be thought of as normal developmental processes, especially in certain life phases. For instance, adolescence is known to be a period of heightened involvement in anti-social and risky behaviors. The motivation to engage in risky behavior during this stage of development is known to be linked to peer and family networks, personality characteristics, biological development, and social context. So in the case of an adolescent's extreme behaviors – or behaviors that are outside of the norm – they need to be viewed through a developmental approach. However, it is important to note that while anti-social behavior may be widely associated with adolescence, so too is pro-social behavior; and these are not mutually exclusive. Whether behavior is categorized as pro- or anti-social, the motivation “to act or not to act” serves to fulfil personal needs.

In this framework, the main unresolved question is what pushes individuals to embrace extremism and/or violent extremism to meet personal needs, which requires the adoption or active incitement and/or support of violent means, and whether it is worth exploring approaches that provide alternatives to fulfill those needs.

The concept of meeting the individual's needs seem to be central for both prevention and restorative approaches (i.e. disengagement/ de-radicalization/ rehabilitation and reintegration). In this latter case, recent studies conducted on radical right extremism indicated that extremists were motivated to disengage by the “need to belong” and the “need to have a stable family”¹³. Additionally, research indicates that the primary motivations that induce an individual to

leave an extremist group lie in the realization that the frameworks and concepts offered by the group are not satisfactory anymore. Notably, the following factors may play a role in the individual's motivation to leave a violent extremist or extremist group:

- ▶ **Group goals:** Disappointment in unattainable goals of the group;
- ▶ **Methods:** Disappointment in violence and methods used by group members;
- ▶ **Leadership:** Disappointment in leaders of the group;
- ▶ **Friendship:** Disappointment in social relations within the group (friendships);
- ▶ **Personal status:** Loss of personal status within the group;
- ▶ **Family:** Competitive loyalty between the group and the family;
- ▶ **Development:** Personal growth (individuals mention they want to start a family and build a future)¹⁴

In other words, the group's values, methods and approaches are not anymore meeting the individual's needs that prompted him/her to join in the first place. Particularly, the appeal of pro-social alternatives and of a “normal life” is often referred as particularly attractive to fulfill the individual's need of maintaining social and family relationship with significant others from the “out-group”¹⁵. In this context, the understanding of the individual's needs – irrespective of the individual's position in the radicalization process- seems to be paramount in order to build effective interventions.



THEORIES OF MOTIVATION, NEEDS, DEVIANCE AND EXTREMISM

On the aforementioned premises, this manual tries to provide a practical framework to understand what motivates individuals and what needs are being pursued through specific behaviors. The assumption is that understanding how to fulfill an individual's critical need may lead to a more pro-social and fulfilling life, irrespective of the individual's position in the radicalization process. In turn, this can fuel the individual's resilience against deviant behaviors, which includes extremism and violent extremism. Personal needs are also at the core of rehabilitation, disengagement and/or de-radicalization programs. If we assume that individuals tend to adopt specific behaviors to fulfill their needs, the understanding of needs is crucial irrespective of whether the individual is at-risk of radicalization or already fully committed to violent extremism. In other words, understanding what motivates people is fundamental to develop effective and appealing pro-social alternatives, both in preventive and restorative interventions.

While there is plenty of research on this subject, this manual builds upon the following non-exhaustive literature. These theories do not represent the solely relevant theories on the subject, but they are deemed as particularly influential in the field:

There are several theories that highlight how the individual's needs are targeted and "met" by extremist and/or violent extremist groups. Practitioners and society need to offer pro-social and positive trajectories/opportunities to fill the gaps, before extremist recruiters do so.

Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR).

Within the field of psychology and criminology, one of the early needs-based models was called the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR)¹⁶. This model distinguished between two different types of risk factors – static and dynamic. Static risk factors refer to unchangeable individual characteristics or features such as historical events, personal background and family background. Dynamic risk factors are personal, psychological and behavioral features that have potential for change. The approach was particularly focused on these latter factors, which are referred to as criminogenic needs. This whole approach was developed to prevent recidivism (repeat offending).¹⁷ Importantly, this approach captured a range of factors both personal and situational.

Significance Quest Theory (SQT).

Another needs-based approach that is focused specifically on radicalization is called the Significance Quest Theory (SQT)¹⁸. This approach provides a theoretical structure to help understand the process of radicalization into extremism and/or violent extremism. This approach primarily examines personal needs and motivations but importantly, also considers how ideology, social, and cultural factors impact the individual. The SQT proposes that seeking personal significance (significance quest) is a need that lies at the heart of an individual's choice to engage in extremism and/or violent extremism. The framework unites a number of human needs under the

umbrella of a significance quest (honour, humiliation avoidance, vengeance, social status, financial needs, loyalty to a leader, and ideological desires). The approach draws widely on needs-based theoretical frameworks that focus on *normal* human behaviour. In addition, this framework introduces the notion of *significance*, a subjective, individualized experience that captures a diversity of values and needs, while ensuring that predetermined categories of needs are not prioritized¹⁹. The theory also postulates that these needs are mobilized by specific “narratives and “networks” around the individual.

This model is also relevant for restorative approaches. The theory underlines that the restorative process towards pro-social behaviour is determined by the same general factors as the process of radicalization, though the specifics are different. In other words, deradicalization too is triggered by the personal human needs that lie at the core of the radicalization process, but the specific need, narrative, and network factors may be different from those that led to radicalization in the first place²⁰.

Good Lives Model

Another approach that is focused on needs, is the **Good Lives Model (GLM)**²¹. This approach takes the position that offending is essentially the product of a desire (need) for something; and that this is a standard human process. However, in the case of offending and violent extremism, the problem emerges when seeking this need harms others. The authors of this model focused on building capacity and strengths (i.e. protective factors) and providing skills that are critical for an individual’s development towards a **pro-social** life.²² Importantly, this model emphasizes that despite their past problematic behavior, individuals should be treated with respect and dignity. In addition, the authors emphasize that in attempting to prevent an individual from engaging in problematic behavior, the aim should not merely be the removal of that behavior but the enabling of the individual to choose other more adaptive behaviors. Finally, the GLM also focuses on values and they recognize the role of an individual’s values on their cognitions and behavioral choices.

Salutogenesis

As mentioned, needs-based models are not unique to extremism, violent extremism or criminology. They are widely adopted in the business, social sciences, education, epidemiological, and medical fields. For example, an approach from within the medical field is that of **Salutogenesis**. This means that instead of focusing on *causes of disease*, we should instead focus on the strength and resilience needed to bolster health. Overall, psychological and sociological research around developing personal resilience against developing **anti-social** and criminal behaviors has been a growing research field for the last 30 years; and importantly, we are increasingly seeing social resilience as a key feature in these approaches.

Ecological Approach to Human Development and Socialization

The manual is also based on Urie Bronfenbrenner’s *ecological approach to human development and socialization*²⁴. This model acknowledges that child development is impacted by a variety of macro-structural realities, to include economy, political atmosphere, and cultural context. All these elements play a role in the child’s developmental scheme and the day-to-day immediate environment. Although specifically related to child development, this approach has the benefit to emphasize that macro-level factors have the potential to greatly impact an individual in his/her life choices. In turn, this helps us understand how distant systems can impact an individual’s needs. This model was important as it encourages one to investigate the social structure and the context surrounding the individual as potential influences for needs and motivations.

Moral Ecology of Extremism

The approach that underpins Bouhana’s S5 inference framework is called the *Moral Ecology of Extremism*²⁵. The approach takes the position that we cannot know the infinite combinations of factors that lead to involvement in extremism so we should instead focus on the evidence available (known elements

that interact in knowable ways) to suppress the risk of *extremist propensity development* and *extremist action*. Propensity development relates to the process whereby individuals come to see violent extremism as legitimate. It also refers to the progressive willingness to actively participate in an extremist act. Bouhana calls the process of radicalization as “extreme moral change” but points out that moral change and extremist action should be viewed separately – one is not dependent on the other.

The S5 framework include five levels of analysis which partly focus on the context, and partly on the individual-level. Bouhana points out that an individual’s susceptibility is based on contextual influences. Ultimately, what the author states is that trying to understand why some people and not others participate in extremism comes down to how certain kinds of people find themselves in certain kinds of contexts, at certain times. This conclusion is also supported by other authors who demonstrated how psychological and social factors can drive “moral individuals” to commit immoral actions²⁶.

These models were particularly important to develop the structure of the manual which partly focuses on individual-level Domains and partly focuses on the context (social groups and economic context).

Hedayah’s Approach

On the basis of these foundations, Hedayah developed a manual that is need-focused and based on the evidence available, as opposed to risk-oriented and based on predictive values. The aim of the manual is to assist practitioners working with individuals potentially or actually involved in extremism and violent extremism (beliefs and/or actions) and guide them in meaningful interactions around their needs. In turn, this aims to encourage the clients to develop positive personal development and pro-social behavior. This approach looks at violent extremism and/or extremism as one out of several potential deviant behaviors in which a vulnerable individual may fall into. In particular, it adopts a perspective that seeks to enhance an individual’s personal resilience and strengths against the pathways to deviant or anti-social behaviors (including extremism and/or violent extremism). This is done by identifying how an individual can meet their critical needs without resorting to anti-social or violent

means or without being in conjunction with violent extremist or other anti-social groups. This approach builds upon the available personal resources (e.g. skills, executive functions, pro-social networks, etc.) that are available.

Reflecting on the multi-factorial and multi-level issues that are relevant for understanding an individual’s involvement in violent extremism, this manual encourages an ecological and social-oriented approach with the aim to implement a *Needs and Strengths Assessment*. This means that we are concerned with the individual, his/her bio-psycho-social environment and the available opportunities and challenges in his/her environment. The interaction of these systems inform how we conceptualize issues and make recommendations. The aim is to share practical guidance for engaging with individuals potentially or actually involved in extremism and/or violent extremism. It will offer templates to assist in planning to work with these individuals that are widely used in various social and counseling settings around the world. It also highlights the measures used in social work and psychological services that might be useful in cases of violent extremism.

Notably, the manual encourages the use of trust-building and information-gathering tools widely accepted in psychology and/or sociology, such as the **Social Network Map**, the **Reflexive Life Line** tool, the **Socratic Dialogue**, the **Motivational Interviewing (MI)** technique and the **Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM)**. Finally, the manual will also provide general guidelines and principles on trust-building and rapport-building and will also provide examples of topics to investigate during the interaction with the client, in each Domain (in the section: *The Manual in Practice*).



To summarize, the manual is based on the following guiding principles:

a. **Just enough, just in time, just for you** – Practitioners should not underestimate their ability to bring about significant change through tailored and individual-focused interventions. This is the opposite of "just in case" because it means that practitioners deal with the available evidence rather than hypothesizing about future behaviors.

b. **Ecological** – The approach is focused on the client, his/her bio-psycho-social environments, and the interaction of these systems.

c. **Context sensitive** – The manual is informed by environments and groups around the client (primary, secondary, tertiary).

d. **Non-clinical** – It is primarily meant for non-clinical practitioners in a counselling setting.

e. **Repeated measures/dynamic** – It can be re-used at various intervals to capture change across time.

f. **Need-focused** – In this manual, behavior is viewed as actions that serve to meet an identified critical need. The notion of "client's needs" does not equate with "client's wants" as the client may not be fully aware of what his/her needs really are.

g. **Ethical** – This manual emphasizes that practitioners should be bound to the specific ethical framework of their organization, when engaging with the client. An ethical approach would ensure: 1) compliance with human rights; 2) confidentiality, data protection; 3) clear transparency and boundaries; 4) the client's buy in, consent and self-agency in all phases of the process. If the practitioner does not have an ethical framework to refer to, they should consider developing one that is contextualized and culturally-sensitive, based on available existing models²⁷.

h. **Client-led** – this manual advocates for a participatory approach in which the client is involved, from the beginning, in prioritizing his/her needs. The steps and the information-gathering process would therefore be subjective and dependent on the client's buy-in. Ensuring a client-led approach would strengthen his/her sense of self-agency in the process and would likely produce sustainable results over the long-term.

The approach offered here is based on the principles outlined above. While this manual draws on a range of practical instruments used by professionals worldwide in both clinical and non-clinical settings, the approach is explicitly non-clinical. This means that it comprises a theoretical framework that can be used to inform interviewing, assessment, and intervention planning. It is not a tool for risk assessment nor to inform clinical decisions. Clinical instruments that are designed to assess risk posed to others and/or the individual himself/herself in a criminal justice setting, are complex, require significant training, and usually involve a highly skilled and trained professional. In general, these instruments tend to be very complex and are not infallible.²⁸ Therefore, this manual will not seek to replace or improve these clinical tools, but will simply reference them, where appropriate.

It should be noted that the manual does not aim to disregard risk assessment tools. In fact, there are still clients who returned to anti-social behaviors and/or re-offending, after undergoing an intervention, which triggers the question on how to better prevent recidivism. This may be the case of individuals who are strongly committed to certain anti-social ideological perspectives and are not willing to compromise on those, despite finding pro-social alternatives. Still, even in these cases, without a preliminary analysis of the client's needs and social environment, the identification of any predictors of recidivism is challenging and ultimately empirically unsupported.

While not focusing on the traditional notion of "risks", this manual acknowledges the existence and validity of traditional risk assessment tools. For awareness, it is sufficient to mention that there are generally three assessment approaches:

- 1. Actuarial Risk Assessment Instruments (ARAIs).** These are tests used to determine if an individual is likely to engage in violence in the future. The determination is based on data that exists from criminal justice data bases, whereby algorithms are developed and mathematically determined.²⁹
- 2. Unstructured Clinical Judgement (UCJ).** This method relies solely on the professional judgement of a clinical practitioner.³⁰
- 3. Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ).** This method uses structured or semi-structured written tests in combination with the professional judgement of a clinician.³¹

A non-exhaustive list of assessment tools - including risk assessment tools - is available for information in Annex 1.



A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE DOMAINS OF INVESTIGATION

For a practitioner's effective engagement with the client and for information-gathering purposes, it is crucial to select specific **Domains** related to **attitudes, behaviors, skills and resources** that are universally important in life. These Domains are generally important, regardless of the existence of anti-social behaviors, extremism and/or violent extremism. The Domains proposed in this manual are influenced by the levels outlined in Bronfenbrenner's model and the ecological interpretation of involvement in extremism

The Domains of investigation relate to attitudes, behaviors, skills and resources that are universally important in people's life. Although these presented Domains are analytically separated, in practice they overlap and interact with one another.

and violent extremism offered by Bouhana. While these Domains are analytically separated in this manual, it should be noted that it may be difficult to separate them in practice; and that overlaps and interactivity of the Domains are an important feature of any needs analysis. Practitioners should take into account these Domains, through their engagement with clients, and gather information to determine whether any of the Domain presents any "needs" or "protective factors" that could inform follow-up analysis and intervention.

Suggested Domains:

Personal
Goals and/or
Interests



History/
Biography



Individual Skills
and Competencies

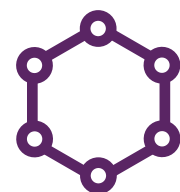
- ▶ Education/Vocational Skills;
- ▶ Social Skills;
- ▶ Executive Functions;



Family
and Friends
(Primary Group)



Social Groups
(secondary
and tertiary)
and Social &
Economic context



A brief overview for each Domain is provided below. Additional information on how to collect and analyze information per each Domain is provided in the section: *The Manual in Practice*.



PERSONAL GOALS AND/OR INTERESTS

There are several reasons why this is mentioned as one of the Domains and also as the first Domain. Firstly, research shows that focusing on the client's **intrinsic motivation** (motivation based on what is rewarding for an individual and based on the individual's own goals or values) is an effective method to reduce the negative effects of social categorization and prejudice³². When intrinsic motivation is activated, it enables an individual's personal **resilience** against stress and adversarial events.³³ Goals and values are closely linked to an individual's identity and as such are key features of a person's sense of self. Understanding these goals and values are an important first step in understanding the choices a client has made.

Discussing personal goals and interests also helps to build trust with the client. People tend to talk more easily about their own goals and passions. Additionally, making plans for the future based on personal goals and interests is a method for deradicalization work in prison-settings³⁴. Where previously the client's goals and/or interests may have encouraged him/her towards participation in anti-social behaviors, through the provision of alternatives, these may be charted towards socially appropriate, acceptable, and productive trajectories.



HISTORY/BIOGRAPHY

Research indicated that experiences such as witnessing violence, trauma, living in a disrupted family environment, and other adversarial events in the client's past might be predictive of future **dysfunctional** behaviors. However, protective factors and personal strengths have the capacity to prevent the development of dysfunction, even in cases of severe trauma³⁵. Therefore, when seeking information on an individual's personal history, it is vital to consider both positive and negative experiences and relationships. The use of the **Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM)** is considered to be an effective strategy to get relevant information³⁶. In addition, the **Reflexive Lifeline** is another important tool that may help the client to take ownership of the narrative and express himself/herself through the use of visuals. These tools and methods will be further explained in following sections.

Examples of protective factors based on personal history may include functional coping strategies, pro-social friends and family members, and positive personal skills. Generally, for trust-building purposes, it is also more appropriate to start enquiring about positive historical events, rather than the negative ones. In many cases, if access to such interaction is possible, relevant information may be gathered from significant others. Family members can offer information about childhood experience.





INDIVIDUAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

This Domain pertains to individual skills and is subdivided into three **sub-categories**:



Educational/Vocational skills



Social Skills



Executive Functions

These categories usually play a crucial role in any individual's development and are considered vital skills for the fulfillment of personal needs.³⁷ Research indicates that educational or vocational ambitions in itself have the power to alleviate negative experiences in an individual's life³⁸, and that strengthening social skills³⁹ and executive functions⁴⁰ can prevent future deviant or anti-social behavior. Encouraging the development of skills to achieve personal objectives in a pro-social and realistic manner may help the increase of personal resilience against extremism and violent extremism.



FAMILY AND FRIENDS (PRIMARY GROUP)

The **primary group** encompasses people who have extremely close relationships with the client. This may include close family members or very close friends, who usually play an important role in any individual's life and may potentially be the closest groups to the client. Both family and close friends can serve as negative and positive influencers. There are several ways these groups may affect the individual:

- a. Through the transmission of values.
- b. Through challenging or reinforcing beliefs.
- c. Through mirroring behaviors.
- d. Through parenting style.
- e. Through modelling appropriate/inappropriate behavior.
- f. Through the brokering and multiplication of functional/dysfunctional contacts.

Both **pro-social** and **anti-social** sentiments and behaviors from people close to the client may be influential, meaning that an individual will tend to adopt the behaviors and values modelled by the people closest to them.⁴¹ In addition, in the case of youth and children, the influence of one *good adult* can mitigate negative influences.⁴² "Role models" are considered also important for children and youth's development and may significantly impact the direction of one's life. Identifying "role models" in an individual's network may be of critical importance for the development of preventive and rehabilitative responses. With respect

to rehabilitation of radicalized individuals, it was already noted that, amongst the several factors that motivate disengagement, the attraction of having stable and significant relationship with significant peers is key. This means that understanding the individual's network and the specific nature of each relationship can give an insight on how to provide feasible and pro-social alternatives as opposed to those offered by the violent extremist group.

Given the influence of interpersonal relationships, it may be useful to map an individual's network, after obtaining the client's consent. This process might be even conducted with the direct help of the individual and function as a method of self-reflection. Mapping the client's social network has two purposes:

1. First of all, it is important to know if there are pro-social influences within the individual's groups of reference. Such influences will play an important role in any preventive or rehabilitative work. It is also important to know if there are any anti-social influences and to identify them. Research identified several criteria to follow when analyzing networks and stakeholders around the client. For example, the following categories can be assessed when drawing a **Social Network Map**:

Key Factors to develop a Social Network Map

- ▶ **Network size:** total number of people identified in the network;
- ▶ **Domain size:** total number/proportions of people in each of given groups;
- ▶ **Perceived availability of emotional, concrete, and informational support:** proportion of network rated as "almost always" available to provide the needed types of support;
- ▶ **criticalness:** proportion of network perceived to be "almost always" critical of the individual;
- ▶ **Closeness:** proportion of network perceived to be "very close";
- ▶ **Reciprocity:** proportion of network relationships in which "help goes both ways";
- ▶ **Directionality:** proportion of network relationships in which help goes primarily from client to network and proportion of network relationships in which help goes primarily from network to client;
- ▶ **Stability:** length of relationship;
- ▶ **Frequency:** frequency of contact.

Fig. 1: Key Factors to develop a Social Network Map. Source: Tracy and Whittaker, 1990⁴³.

A Social Network Map may also look at the client's position within his/her groups of reference, allowing for a visual representation between the client and his/her groups of reference. In this context, it is critical to allow for the client to express his/her personal perception of these networks. In practice, the client would draw his/her position at the center of a blank page and would draw all the existing links and connections with individuals in his/her group of reference. The farthest any person is from the client, the more distant the relationship is between that specific person and the client⁴⁴. This would allow the practitioner to gain information on potential

individuals in these groups who can be mobilized for the intervention. Existing models⁴⁵ grouped the client's social networks in:

- ▶ Friends/ acquaintances;
- ▶ Family relatives;
- ▶ Authorities/ professional relationships;
- ▶ Studies/Education/Job.

Network of Maria S. (21 y.o.) 13.8.2020

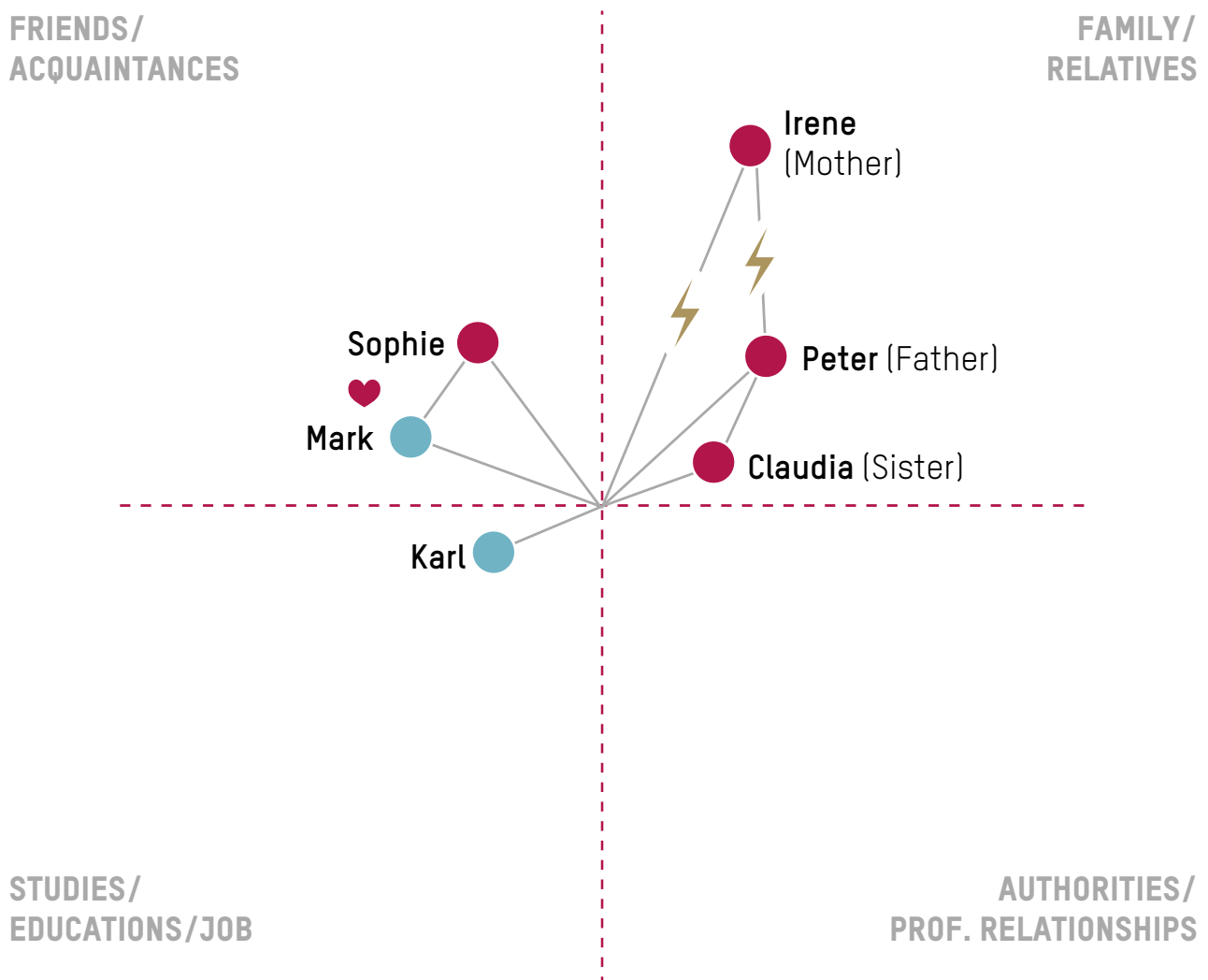


Fig. 2: The Social Network Map- Example. Source: Maximilian Ruf and Dennis Walkenhorst, p. 10, RAN, 2021⁴⁶

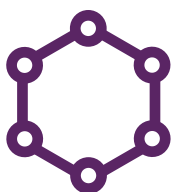
As Ruf and Walkenhorst (2021) mentioned, a graphic and client-led discussion on the social network map can help to respond to the following questions:

- ▶ “Who is central to the communicative system within the network?;
- ▶ Who has important functions?;
- ▶ How well is the network integrated? Is it segregated? Why?;
- ▶ What type of support is offered? By which person?”⁴⁷.

Practitioners should help the client develop their own Social Network Map based on the available information, the specific case and the cultural context.

2. Secondly, mapping the client's social network is also useful to assess if certain relationships within the primary group (i.e. family or close friends) need to be re-established as well as how they may benefit from intervention. For example, taking into account how and why certain relationships became severed because of potential extremism or violent extremism is important. This may be not only because of the extremist beliefs or activity but also because of the possibility of the individual's family being stigmatized due to exposure or contact to extremist and violent extremist groups.

Understanding dynamics within primary groups is important as family and friends may play a crucial role in the client's journey to pro-social life. Utilizing visual Social Network Maps may offer valuable insights in the client's perception of his/her groups of reference and his/her position in society. It would also help identify potential areas of strengths and protective factors.



SOCIAL GROUPS (SECONDARY AND TERTIARY) AND SOCIAL & ECONOMIC CONTEXT

In addition to primary groups, it is important to identify other important social groups and define the socio-economic environment in the country, region, or community of reference. These elements might be strong drivers for both **pro-social** and **anti-social behaviors** and can either foster **functional** (e.g. resilient, pro-social) or **dysfunctional** (e.g. impulsive, reckless) behaviors in identified individuals and/or groups of individuals. Social and economic outlook is crucial when analyzing needs and strengths in a certain community. Mapping positive and negative influences, as well as resources, is essential when developing programs that aim to strengthen individual and community resilience. In fact, strong resilience within a community can counter the negative effect of adversarial events, such as conflicts, social tensions, and economic collapse, which might in turn fuel individual-level grievances potentially leading to extremism and violent extremism⁴⁸.

In this Domain, it is particularly important to identify **secondary and tertiary groups** relevant for the client. While secondary groups can be easily described as peers or surrounding community members, tertiary groups are aspirational groups that serve as ideal role models for the individual. It should be noted that secondary and tertiary groups could also be those that exercise negative influence and drive to deviance or anti-social behaviors. It is therefore fundamental to identify the client's tertiary groups of reference and assess whether they exercise a positive or a negative influence. An important concept in this Domain is the client's **sense of identity and belonging**, which usually depends on the self-identification with social “in-groups”, as opposed to “out-groups”. Extremist and violent extremist groups

have been extremely successful so far in intercepting the individual's need for belonging, by fueling the "in-group/ out-group dynamics" and by exploiting the process of **social categorization**⁴⁹. In fact, they often adopt appealing and galvanizing narratives that push the individual to embrace a simplistic definition of himself/herself, as opposed to society. This strategy is particularly impactful with vulnerable individuals who may struggle in self-identifying themselves in pro-social groups, values and beliefs and/or often experienced a prolonged feeling of grievance, inadequacy and marginalization in the mainstream society. Therefore, it is crucial for practitioners to map all the potential influences that the client is subject to, to include secondary and tertiary groups, which often serve as aspirational role models.

Finally, extensive research on the economic and social context as well as a client's groups of reference (i.e. tertiary groups, but also primary and secondary) can also provide a realistic indication of whether the concern for actual radicalization is tangible. For example, if there is a structural problem in the community, a notable influence of an extremist narrative in a certain community, or if the research showed that there are recruiters in the client's groups of reference, this would make any concerns for an individual's radicalization much more credible. In these cases, it is opportune to involve risk assessment professionals to ascertain and collect potential evidence behind the suspicion of radicalization.



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PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND STRENGTHS

Within the five Domains, practitioners will also be asked to identify **protective factors**. Protective factors can be defined as positive influences and strengths, that can decrease the likelihood that individuals engage in anti-social or even criminal behaviors⁵⁰. Also, in the specific context of "Countering Extremism and Violent Extremism", protective factors may also be defined as characteristics that indicate a person's commitment to social norms and activities incompatible with extremism and/or violent extremism⁵¹.

Protective factors are ultimately personal or environmental strengths that should not be disregarded when evaluating the client's situation. If identified, they could potentially alleviate or compensate for a critical unfulfilled need or a need that has been met in a dysfunctional manner. And they could also be mobilized through an intervention. These factors can roughly be divided into **personal and environmental protective factors**:

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Resilience/Coping strategies

The way in which a client deals with setbacks in life (resilience/coping strategies) is always an important factor to evaluate. Good coping strategies and high resilience can effectively counter the negative effects of any identified critical needs. Even if the client predominantly presents dysfunctional coping strategies, it is important to identify the functional ways, because these are the elements that are important to reinforce in the intervention.

Coping strategies may include: realistic views on achieving goals, capacity for logical reasoning; taking responsibility for his/her own (future) actions, ability to see his/her own involvement in conflicts; ability to organize and be focused if interested in something; good impulse control/control on tolerance of ambiguity (i.e. the individual's ability to face unpredictable and uncertain situations)

If the client has any of these protective factors, practitioners know that there are better chances for the client has to be consistent and responsible in making plans in his/her own life. Conversely, if these factors are overall lacking, practitioners should expect to re-engage with the individual multiple times before reaching a working relationship, since the opposite traits often signal a high drop-out rate. For this reason, it is important that this ability is assessed, so as to ensure success and reduce frustration. This requires extensive counselling as aspirations can be unrealistic.

Pro-social goals, Pro-social Interests and Relevant Skills

These are important factors for building an intervention. Information from the Domain *Personal Goals and/or Interests*, and specifically these protective factors, are likely to lay down the foundation for any intervention. Example of pro-social goals and/or interests include: attachment to pro-social family members; interest in pro-social and positive activities in the community; positive and pro-social dreams for the future. Relevant vocational or educational skills - under the Domain *Individual Skills and Competencies* - are also important resilience factors as these can protect individuals against precarious situations and social vulnerability.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Connection to pro-social primary group, pro-social secondary and tertiary groups; existence of resources and sources of resilience in the community that can be appealing to the individual.

Pro-social individuals and groups can effectively contribute to building an individual's resilience. Notably, the social network around the client usually plays a very important part in an intervention, as already mentioned when presenting the "Social network Map". At the same time, the existence of resources within the community of reference (community forums, charismatic community leaders, or positive role models) may be powerful to promote an individual's pro-social life.

Fig 3: Personal protective factors and Environmental protective factors



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THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION ENDNOTES

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THE

MANUAL

IN PRACTICE

THIS MANUAL IS DESIGNED TO GUIDE PRACTITIONERS TO CAPTURE KEY INFORMATION AND IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS' NEEDS AND STRENGTHS. HOWEVER, IT ADOPTS A "JUST ENOUGH, JUST IN TIME, JUST FOR YOU" APPROACH THAT PRIORITIZES THE CLIENT'S NEEDS, AS THESE ARE PRESENTED IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT AND TIME. THIS IS THE OPPOSITE OF A "JUST IN CASE" APPROACH WHERE THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S BEHAVIOR IN THE FUTURE (E.G. RISKS AND THREATS POSED TO SOCIETY) DOMINATE.

This manual refers to all clients, irrespective of their involvement in extremism and/or violent extremism. This means that it may be applicable for both clients that are potentially vulnerable to extremism and/or violent extremism as well as clients already committed or exposed to these issues, such as terrorist convicts or family members in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration. However, recognizing that the individual's personal circumstances may have an impact on the one-on-one engagement, the manual will address specific differences in the approaches, when relevant. It is also equally crucial to note that the existence of critical needs does not mean that the client is necessarily radicalized or prone to recidivism. As mentioned, this manual does not replace risk assessment tools that are specifically meant to assess extremism and violent extremism. Any measurement of the level of radicalization and/or exposure and/or commitment to violent extremism is beyond the scope of this manual. Instead, it offers guidance to capture the client's **critical needs** and inform adequate interventions to meet those, irrespective of whether the individual is vulnerable and/or already radicalized or recruited into extremism or violent extremism. This means that if your objective is instead to directly assess the specific risk or level of radicalization, it is best to use other standard tools and instruments that are more oriented to capturing the risk of extremism, violent extremism or recidivism into violent extremism.

At its core, this manual teaches that practitioners should aim to capture as much information as possible in a transparent manner, evaluate the data in a holistic way and assess what the client's critical needs are. The objective should always be to use this information to then guide the client to be a functioning member of the society and live a fulfilling life. It is meant to be used by non-clinical practitioners who are required to engage with clients and plan for interventions. The manual is not meant for professionals who are highly experienced in assessments. It should be noted, however, that it can be still used by experienced practitioners as a foundational tool. Importantly, while this manual draws on a range of long-established theoretical approaches, a key element in the determination of needs is the input of the client. Establishing needs, developing interventions, and triggering significant personal change can only be achieved with the buy-in of the client. This means that clients should ideally be consulted at the decision-making level, as much as feasible.

The style of this manual is informal and not meant to be an academic publication: it aims to provide practical and basic guidance, and directly addresses the practitioner by using "you" and utilizing a simple language that aims to ensure full understanding of its content. For optimization, it is recommended that practitioners performing the assessment are also trained in related skills such as Biographical Narrative interpretative Method (BNIM) and Motivational Interviewing training. In addition, practitioners must refrain from formally interrogating and/ or perceived to be interrogating. Indeed, the importance of active listening skills has been ranked as the most important by interviewing professionals⁵².

Finally, this manual does not provide specific guidance on referral systems. Its content guides practitioners on how to build trust, and gather and code information, irrespective of whether the individual interviewed is referred to the practitioner or is identified autonomously by the practitioner. Recognizing that is often difficult to obtain the buy-in from ideologically-motivated terrorists, an intrinsic motivation from the individual to receive support is ideal in order to initiate an engagement in a meaningful manner.

TRUST BUILDING AND DATA COLLECTION: Key Principles and Practical Recommendations

As a practitioner, you need to establish trust with the client and familiarize with appropriate data collection approaches and ethical principles, before initiating the four-step *Needs and Strengths Assessment Process*.

Before introducing the *Needs and Strengths Assessment* process, it is worth providing guidance and techniques to build trust with your client, as it would not be possible to gather information and implement the process, without establishing a trustworthy and reliable rapport. Trust is crucial and you should start building it, from your first meeting with the client. On this basis, the practitioner can navigate the Five Domains and gather appropriate information for the final assessment. However, building trust with clients and collecting information requires the adoption of a specific ethos and methodology, based on ethical guidelines, engagement principles and techniques. This section further elaborates on these techniques, guidelines and principles, while presenting practical tools to aid the overall process. Ultimately, the success of any intervention much depends on this sensitive phase, as the practitioner would need to earn the client's trust and develop a shared direction for the engagement.

Trust cannot be earned immediately and it should be maintained and reinforced throughout the engagement. To do so, at all stages of the information-gathering process, you must adhere to appropriate interviewing skills and data-collection methods, which would simultaneously reinforce trust. The practitioner must refrain from interrogation⁵³. In fact, the likelihood of getting relevant and valid information is high if the person does not perceive threats. In the 2020 Macmillan online dictionary, 'interrogation' is defined as "the process of asking someone a lot of questions in an angry or threatening way, in order to get information"⁵⁴. On the other hand, interviewing involves mutual respect, understanding and aims

at rapport-building. This does not exclude that interviewing may be undertaken in an investigative manner, especially if the individual in question has had any level of active involvement with violent extremist organizations and is in a custodial setting. Rapport-building in investigative settings has been at the core of several international frameworks. For example, *the Convention Against Torture Initiative* has described investigative interviewing as a technique developed by practitioners to respond to the large body of scientific evidence that abusive and coercive techniques elicit unreliable information. Through building rapport with the interviewee, the technique has been found not only to prevent abusive practices, but also to improve the collection and reliability of information⁵⁵. The aim of interviewing and rapport-building should be therefore to maximize benefit to the individual under the care of each practitioner, while keeping in mind that trust and rapport⁵⁶ can be fully developed only when the individual is willing to be honest about his/her experiences, and while the practitioner continues to have an unconditional positive regard based on an accepting, respectful, non-judgmental stance⁵⁷.

Before planning for an interview, it is important to prepare and understand the client. There are a number of options for practitioners when they are planning to meet a client for the first time. **One option** is not to take into account any pre-existing information and use the face-to-face meetings as an opportunity to listen and gather information without the influence of existing data. This is in fact a very useful approach, as it prevents biases from impacting the relationship during the early rapport-building phase. **Another**

approach is to collect all available reports from other agencies and review the data prior to the meeting. This also allows you to assess, at a later stage, the degree to which the client has been forthcoming about his/her experiences related to anti-social behaviors, extremism and/or violent extremism. This may be more effective, in those cases where there is already information available about the client and may avoid duplication of efforts. In addition, in the case of clients in custodial settings who are convicted for violent extremist offences, having an overview of the client may also be helpful to understand any potential risks to practitioners and staff of the rehabilitation center, as the data may inform the required safety and security protocols⁵⁸.

In an ideal world, practitioners would be free to make a choice regarding their preference, but in reality, data may be missing or redacted, information may be incorrect or partially correct and the individual may be unwilling to be engaged. It is important here that your own professional standards inform the strategy you take with your client – there is not one correct way of doing this. Also, be aware that the first assessment is just *one* assessment, not necessarily the truth. It is also very likely that one approach may suit one client better than the other, as each individual is unique, and some may be more forthcoming when they know that the practitioner has information prior to the meeting, while others may be more hesitant.

Importantly, things that should be considered prior to engaging with any client are:

1. the issue of confidentiality/anonymity;
2. the criteria under which information about the individual will be shared with the police/security services if needed;
3. how consent will be achieved;
4. what the protocols for dealing with minors are;
5. under which conditions information can be gathered from friends/family/key workers etc.; and
6. what happens to the data once it is collected

These issues should be addressed in advance, referring to the local legislation on data protection, confidentiality and privacy law. Currently, there are

relevant frameworks that may be referred to, especially in relation to custodial settings. For example, the EU Directive 2016/680 on “the *Protection of Natural Persons With Regard to the Processing of Personal Data by Competent Authorities for the Purposes of the Prevention, Investigation, Detection or Prosecution of Criminal Offences or the Execution of Criminal Penalties, and on the Free Movement of Such Data*” is a useful framework for European countries to develop their own data protection protocols, with respect to individuals in custodial settings .

In this context, it is also paramount that the conditions under which information should be disclosed to police/security services are clear. Any relevant protocol should be also disclosed to the client at the outset of the relationship, while also emphasizing aspects that are likely to remain completely confidential. Additionally, through the course of interactions, this point may have to be intermittently repeated, to assure the client of the limitations of the relationship and information that is being collected. Finally, it is important to consider cultural issues, language issues and gender issues in any interaction you are planning. Generally, individuals may more likely to react positively to members of their in-group; and may be less likely to establish trust where there is a significant imbalance of power. Opening up about your own biography/opinions might be an option to gain trust, if you are comfortable with it, and if this practice is in line with the safety and security guidelines you adhere to. Alternatively, you may also share semi-fictional experiences that relate to your own biography, omitting the most sensitive and personal details.

For younger age groups, it may be appropriate to start interactions by talking about sports or activities they may be interested in, as this enables a relaxed environment between the client and the practitioner. In your planning and preparation, you should try to ascertain some of the client’s interests that you also have some familiarity with – this will make it more likely that an extensive “out-group” barrier will not exist between you and the client.

Once issues of trust, data protection, statutory reporting regulations, and the general boundaries of the practitioner-client relationship have been established, you might consider the following options for gathering information about your client:



- a. Directly interviewing the individual, utilizing open-ended questions, the Socratic Dialogue or the BNIM Approach;
- b. Engaging the individual through the use of Social Network Maps or the Reflexive Lifeline tool, that would allow client to express difficult concepts through the use of visuals and infographics;
- c. Online social media activity (open source);
- d. Direct observation of the individual in various settings;
- e. Interviewing educational professionals (colleagues/ classmates/peer group at the educational Institution), if this is legally possible;
- f. Interviewing allied health professionals who have engaged with the individual, if this is legally possible.
- g. Interviewing friends, if this is legally possible;
- h. Interviewing family members, if this is legally possible;
- i. Interviewing individuals from the community (community members, or elders, where these individuals are considered to play a significant role), if this is legally possible;
- j. Formal reports (medical, psychological, educational, vocational, security, police), if available and accessible and legally possible.

Oftentimes, it is not possible to get all the relevant information you need. In addition, you may find the information you do have access to, as contradictory. Discrepancies in information can also be useful in many ways. For example, if multiple sources seem to contradict the information that the client has provided himself/herself, this may indicate that the individual is withholding information or is misleading others. Inaccurate information is to be expected as individuals may tend to share different information, depending on the environment and the person they are talking to. Importantly, it is not advisable to collect all information in one sitting. Multiple meetings would be the norm, and if possible and permitted by circumstances, you may use multiple settings, including informal settings like parks or cafes, or watching a sports match.



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PRACTICAL INFORMATION-GATHERING AND BUILDING TRUST TECHNIQUES

One of the fundamentals when it comes to sensitive information is **trust**. Without a certain level of trust in you, the client might never share any relevant information. Trust is not something you can automatically establish, as in most cases you have to earn it⁶⁰. Trust-building can be done in several ways. Generally, the better you are at building an authentic relationship, the easier you will gather relevant information to develop a needs-focused intervention. Transparency about your organizational and professional background is important. As far as practicable, be open about who you are and who you work for, especially if interactions occur in informal settings. Be cognizant that trust is not an automatic process and may require long time and multiple engagements before obtaining any “productive” outcome.

It is equally important to highlight that, especially in the case of referred clients (e.g. individuals

Open-ended questions, Motivational Interviewing (MI), Socratic Dialogue, BNIM and Reflexive Lifeline are relevant approaches to reinforce trust with the client, while gathering relevant information.

in detention settings), there needs to be clear boundaries and expectations between the practitioner and the client; and that there needs to be a genuine interest to help the individual. If you feel that you cannot help the individual, you should look for other instruments and interventions or let another practitioner handle the case. Generally, you should also learn to empathize⁶¹ with the individual as much as possible and ask yourself how you would react in those circumstances. If you do not feel comfortable with this, you should probably let another practitioner handle the case. Self-awareness about potential challenges is essential, as it is not necessarily the case that you will be able to assess difficulties at the outset of the relationship. It is very possible that as the relationship develops, these difficulties become increasingly pronounced. However, it is important to be able to recognize them and address them professionally.

In addition, any client, despite what they are charged with or prosecuted for, should be afforded respect and be treated with dignity. Practitioners should practice these values rather than showing judgement towards the behavior of the client.

The stated purpose of any engagement should always prioritize a focus on identifying the client's needs, protective factors, and strengths. The overall aim should be helping and supporting the client towards a pro-social life, in accordance with personal needs, values, capacities, and context. As a practitioner, you

should emphasize that you are there to support the individual in the choices he or she makes, through guidance and counseling; but you cannot make the choices for him or her. Openness, honesty, and professionalism are essential in order to build trust irrespective of the setting or situation.

Trust can be built in several ways. For the purpose of this manual, there are two types of trust that should be considered when engaging with individuals: **interpersonal trust and epistemic trust.**

Interpersonal Trust is defined as a generalized expectancy held by an individual that the word, promise, oral or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on⁶². The term is further defined as the perception that other people will not do anything to harm your interests; this means that the client is showing willingness to accept vulnerability or risk based on expectations regarding another person's behavior.⁶³ In short, interpersonal trust should be understood as an individual's ability and willingness to rely on somebody, whether for information or actions.

An individual's ability to trust another individual is also generally based upon three core elements⁶⁴, namely:

- ▶ The individual's personality and personal experience – particularly as it relates to the belief system surrounding trust, which is developed through experiences of trust;
- ▶ The societal context and norms; and
- ▶ Experiences within the given relationship.

Epistemic Trust⁶⁵ is trust in the authenticity and relevance of shared knowledge. It enables individuals to socially learn and adapt to changing social and cultural contexts. Essentially, epistemic trust is an individual's willingness to consider newly-acquired knowledge as relevant, credible, and worth integrating into their lives. This element, in the case of individuals vulnerable to or involved in extremism, is essential to develop, as this will likely lead to potential alternatives and accommodating changes in the client's lifestyle.

As a practitioner, you should consider these categories of trust at all times in your interactions with clients. It is important that you consistently reflect on trust and how it translates into practice. Reflection should occur regularly in order to consider the specific circumstances of each evolving relationship. Importantly, in the case of a criminal justice setting, there might be boundaries to the relationship dynamics that can hinder your ability to establish trust – these include the inability to share personal information, the coerced nature of the relationship, and the implications of engagement for

the individuals' incarceration duration (e.g. parole etc.). In such circumstances, honesty about the boundaries of the relationship is essential from the beginning. If law enforcement or security agencies are involved in the process, it is also important to establish a protocol to handle the relationship, from the very beginning. This discussion should include the aim of the relationship, the nature of the relationship, issues of confidentiality and relationship rules. It is useful to revisit the boundaries regularly with the client. Consistency is important.



OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

An effective manner for enabling relationship building, achieving trust and gathering valid information is to use **Open-Ended Questions**⁶⁶. Open-ended questions are the opposite of closed questions⁶⁷ – the latter are questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no. Open-ended questions encourage the client to offer a narrative answer to a question rather than a short definitive statement. They also tend to be less leading, and allow the client to take the direction/perspective themselves. Open ended questions must always be non-judgmental and non-directional. Open-ended questions generally tend to focus on:

- ▶ What?
- ▶ Where?
- ▶ When?
- ▶ Who?
- ▶ Whom?
- ▶ How?

Some Examples of questions include:

- ▶ "Tell me what you like?" rather than "Do you like football?"
- ▶ "Tell me about your family?" rather than "Do you have brothers and sisters?"
- ▶ "What are your interests?" rather than "Do you like sports?"
- ▶ "How did that feel?" rather than "Did that make you upset?"

Due to the difficulty in answering questions that start with **why** (e.g. “Why did you do that?”), these should be avoided, unless necessary. As a matter of fact, starting any questions with why might be perceived as accusatory by the client and may actually jeopardize trust-building⁶⁸. Also, when collecting information, you are also not necessarily interested in *why* someone is behaving, thinking or feeling a certain way, you are merely trying to identify what skills are lacking and what the individual’s needs are. An alternative to asking ‘why’ is to ask ‘how’. So for example rather than

asking “Why did you join a local extremist group?” you could ask “How did you join a local extremist group?” This will reveal the process of joining including the antecedent behavior, the interpersonal factors that were relevant for joining, and perhaps even further relevant information. In addition, it is always worth considering that clients might not know *why* they carried out a certain behavior; and even if they do offer a reason why, it is a reflection of their own interpretation of their behavior and this can change over time and depend on whom they are talking to.



BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE INTERPRETATIVE METHOD

The use of open-ended questions is in line with another useful and well-known approach in social sciences: the **Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM)**.⁶⁹ This method focuses on the person’s whole life history (Biography), how they tell it (Narrative), and how these narratives are subject to social interpretation (Interpretive). The BNIM elicits an uninterrupted story from the client by posing a single open-ended question that focuses on an event (Particular Incident Narrative-PNI), as opposed to the feelings associated with it. The problem with investigating feelings is that the individual may not feel comfortable in digging into that, while telling a “story” may appear less threatening and self-revealing. Additionally, once the initial narrative has been completed, which may be done over a number of sessions, it is possible to revisit aspects of interest or concern (for examples, “gaps” in the narrative or “story”) as deemed necessary by the practitioner. This can then allow for more focused discussions around certain experiences, incidents or events.



SOCRATIC DIALOGUE

Another relevant interviewing and engagement method is through **Socratic Dialogue**. This approach is a cognitive methodology primarily aimed to teach both philosophy and ethics, and has been advocated as a basis for enabling ‘problem-solving’ and enhancing effective thinking about life⁷⁰. As a counselling method, it differs considerably from existing approaches as it does not aim to investigate the individual’s issue or problem, but rather the individual’s perspective on a fundamental question and/or topic. For example, you may start a conversation on the meaning of “social justice”, if this is something brought up by the client in one of your engagements with him/her. The dialogue then consists of asking follow-up questions about the concept and e.g. how this is applied in their life, so the clients can discover their own answers by questioning themselves rather than being told about it by someone else. Through a logical progression in the dialogue, you may be able to reveal fundamental inconsistencies across the client’s stated perspective on a topic and his/her actual behavior. This method provides a better understanding of your client’s level of thinking and explore his/her thought processes. While it is still not widely adopted in a CVE context, this approach is now suggested as an emerging and effective methodology for collecting information, as well as implementing deradicalization and ideology- focused interventions⁷¹.



MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

In addition, **Motivational Interviewing (MI)** is another relevant approach based on open-ended questions that may be used to reinforce the client's motivation for a personal change⁷². MI is similar to the Socratic Dialogue in that it entails a fluid conversation which aims at investigating the client's thought process. However, this approach is also action-oriented in that it guides the client to develop a practical roadmap for behavioral change⁷³. This approach can be used for information-gathering purposes, but also as part of an intervention itself. It also promotes a fully collaborative approach with the client, and is based on the OARS Model:

- ▶ **Open Ended Questions:** questions that are not easily answered with a "yes/no" and encourage the client to further elaborate his/her thoughts
- ▶ **Affirmations:** statements used to reinforce the client's pro-social deeds or ideas, which may reinforce the client's vision of himself/herself under a positive light
- ▶ **Reflections:** Providing reflective responses to the client's thoughts, aiming at resolving ambivalence and showing empathy
- ▶ **Summaries:** recapping the conversation, by highlighting the key points discussed, which may further stress that you are interested in the client's narrative.

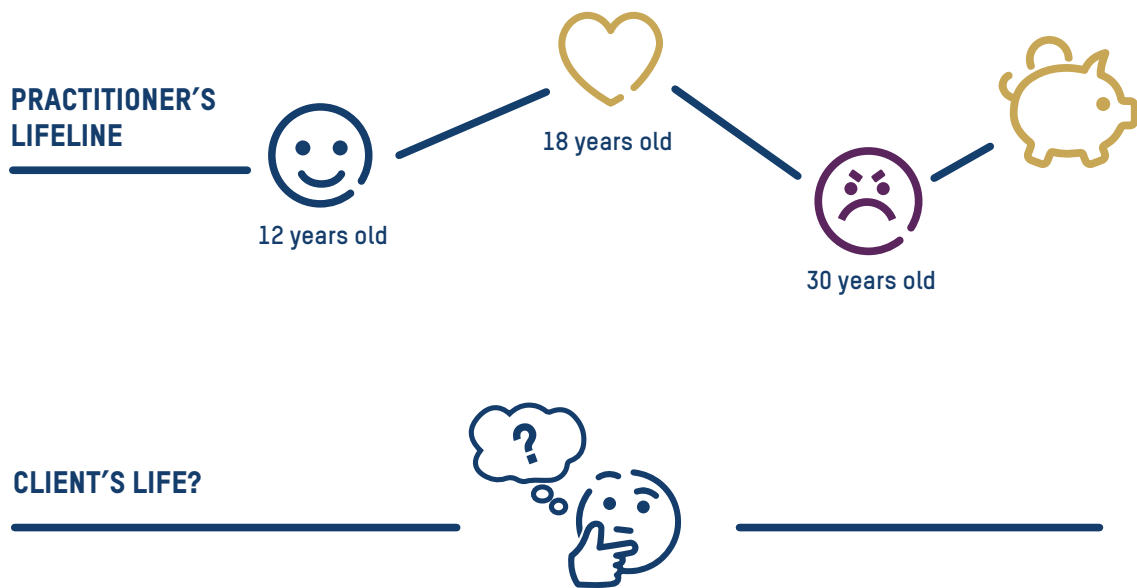


REFLEXIVE LIFELINE

Finally, you may also choose to utilize the **Reflexive Lifelines** tool⁷⁴, which is an approach prominently used for a reflection process within the client's biography. The methodology is simple as it requires for the client to draw a horizontal line- representing his/her own life timeline- and identify the different points in time, when meaningful events occurred. This may include positive experiences as well as negative ones. Through reflexive lifelines, the client is able to map his/her critical events in life and reflect on their importance and influence. It also allows the client to express difficult concepts and events, in a non-verbal manner and can be particularly useful with young clients or clients who experienced traumatic events. Through this method, it is then possible to gather information - particularly from the client's perspective - while simultaneously reinforcing the client's agency in the process.

The Reflexive Lifeline tool may also be used by the practitioner to reinforce the trust building process and can be combined with self-disclosure. For example the practitioner can first draw his/her own reflexive lifeline and showcase the important or meaningful moments in life. This process may be particularly useful when the practitioners needs to present himself/herself to the client. This approach can easily create an atmosphere of equality. This methodology allows practitioners to identify key events in the client's life which can provide information and resources on how to deal with a critical or challenging situation with the client⁷⁵. Finally, it also provides information on the client's thought process and can give a holistic vision of his/her personality and coping strategies⁷⁶.

REFLEXIVE LIFELINE



Irrespective of the preferred method chosen, the most important consideration is to avoid appearing to judge a client. It is important to refrain from challenging values or commenting pejoratively on an individual or his/her behavior. When collecting information for an assessment, your interest should be mainly data-gathering. In fact, interviewing, personal engagement and assessing are not necessarily the same thing as conducting a proper intervention; keeping these phases as separate may help you avoid counter-productive consequences (e.g. mis-informed interventions).

Also, the decision to take action on the basis of limited information can contribute to pushing the individual towards the wrong direction as you may be overlooking crucial information. This may include, for example, misinterpreting existing connections with specific social networks as pro-social influences only because your client speaks positively about them, when in fact these groups may be anti-social.

Therefore, you should always collect as much information as possible and holistically assess that before developing and implementing general plan for intervention. At the same time, engagement with clients can also lead to interesting initial positive

outcomes in terms of rehabilitation. For example, successful engagement and trust-building may simultaneously help the client gain self-confidence and agency in the process, which in itself is essential for successful rehabilitation.

Arguments with your client should be avoided as this will most likely cause him/her to lose interest in talking to you. In short, it does not matter how wrong you think the client is, you must refrain from arguing with him or her. The impulse to correct or argue when you think someone is wrong is usually very strong in people; therefore in order to be effective in your engagement, you have to practice this skill. In case of conflicts on "topics" you may want to refer to the Socratic Dialogue technique that was previously mentioned. It is recommended to practice that before actually engaging any individual. You may practice with a co-worker, where he/she plays the role of the individual being interviewed. It is also important to change roles so everybody gets a chance to play role of the interviewee. Indeed, being in the position of the interviewee is likely to help you strengthen your interviewing techniques.



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GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR AN ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

As mentioned it is crucial for you, as a practitioner to adhere to a specific **Ethical Framework** when conducting engagements and interviews with the client. In addition, to build trust effectively, you may want to adhere to the following principles:

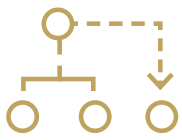


Transparency

It is recommended for you to be as transparent as possible given the context and individual case⁷⁷. Your goal as a practitioner is to establish a trustworthy rapport; and therefore both you and the client need to feel comfortable in order to achieve progress. However, before being transparent, you must consider whether all information will be beneficial to the relationship, specifically, how your point of view or social identity may be viewed by the client⁷⁸.

An ethical framework would ensure that your engagements with the client are conducted effectively, ethically and in line with the relevant protocols and regulations of your organization and/or country.

Lastly, if a client is/was clearly involved in violent extremism and there were concerns about legal ramifications or liability, it is essential that you are upfront and transparent with the client about your role. The practitioner needs to inform the individual what the local laws stipulate about the nature of their relationship and the limitations on confidentiality (if there is any guarantee of confidentiality at all). This is very important, particularly if the engagement is taking place in an enhanced security center, the client would be apprehensive about the extent of confidentiality.



Avoid any perception of hierarchy

When you engage with the client, you should ensure you come across as an equal partner willing to work for a common solution for the benefit of the client. Any perception of hierarchy may intimidate the client, jeopardizing the trust building and information-gathering process. It is crucial that you introduce yourself as friendly and sensitive as possible, ensuring that the client understands that he/she has full agency in the process. Ensuring a client-led process from the beginning would also facilitate your work at a later stage. As already mentioned, the Reflexive Lifeline and the practitioner's self-disclosure can be a useful tool in this circumstance, as it allows the client to feel he/she is on an equal position as the practitioners, when disclosing life events. This does not mean that there should not be limitations and clear boundaries set from the beginning, as you should also avoid to overpromise and present yourself as a close friend. In some specific contexts, this may trigger the client's disappointments, if his/her expectations are then not met.



Self-disclosure

Similar to transparency, self-disclosure is when a practitioner shares a story or experience with the client meant to be close to his/her experience. Self-disclosure can enhance the trust and connection between practitioner and the client by removing the perceived hierarchical position to a more equal position.⁷⁹ It can also help to foster trust through establishing genuineness, authenticity, empathy, and compassion.⁸⁰

However, while this approach can have positive impact, there are also potential risks. A client may not be comfortable with practitioners disclosing their own experience, leading to a "disappointing revelation", which ultimately may diminish trust.⁸¹ In addition, in cases where the social characteristics of the practitioner and the client are very diverse, self-disclosure can be ineffective, as the client may struggle in understanding the practitioner's experience, thus nullifying the benefit of this approach.

In general, psychological research has found that self-disclosure is most helpful when:

- a. Individuals are discussing important personal issues;
- b. Used to normalize or reassure the individuals; and
- c. Consists of a disclosure of non-sensitive information about the practitioner.⁸²

In this context, it is important to note that there are also security implications to be considered here. In case of ideologically committed and/or convicted terrorists, it may not be safe to share personal information. In these cases, you can also think about "filtering" your own disclosed experience, by omitting personal and sensitive information. As a general principle, you should always consult safety and security regulations from your organization to navigate the specific case at hand.



Patience

Practitioners need patience to encourage trust with clients. Patience is necessary because some individuals may not show rapid openness.⁸³ The process can take time and there is no "normal" timeframe: each individual is unique and achieving trust is not guaranteed. However, it is important to note that the need for patience can sometimes contrast with limits in funding and resources available for carrying out the engagement and any subsequent interventions.

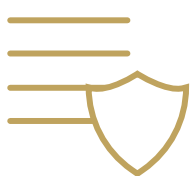
It is also important to keep in mind that the relationship may lead to intermittent withdrawal in openness, and that the client may retreat due to a number of reasons. This is a major reason why it is not only important to build rapport but also to maintain it irrespective of what the client is saying⁸⁴. In practice, you may need to work towards re-establishing the trust as and when required. This can be evident as the sessions progress, especially as more intense topics (especially related to beliefs, values or one's violent activities) come under discussion. If there is no progress in the relationship with the client, you may consider appointing a different colleague to engage with the individual. You may also envisage a strategy where two practitioners coming from different backgrounds (ethnicity, language, cultural

background) start engaging with the client from the very beginning. Through this approach, it is likely that at least one of the two may be successful in building a genuine and trustworthy rapport with the client⁸⁵.



Confidentiality and limitations of confidentiality

You must be respectful of confidentiality. This is a key principle in any ethical frameworks. However, you must also be honest about limitations of confidentiality. Each practitioner or organization has their own legal protocols around confidentiality, but in the case of violent extremism there are often additional regulations that override professional rules. For example, if reporting of suspected violent extremism is mandatory, this may well override practitioner-client confidentiality. It is essential that the limits of confidentiality are discussed with the client at the earliest possible point. This issue should be revisited when a practitioner encounters a situation whereby information she or he receives is required be reported to authorities – giving the client the option to stop disclosing or informing the client that the information will be shared; it is important to manage expectations of the client around confidentiality. Practitioners should also try to identify foreseeable scenarios in which confidentiality must be or is likely to be breached, and try to avoid those or manage those appropriately.⁸⁶



Data protection protocol and local privacy laws

Especially in the case of clients in the prevention space, it is paramount you establish, from the beginning, a protocol on data and information sharing. This is because many information you will collect may touch on the client's intimate sphere of life. The information you collect should not be shared outside your organization, and even within your organization, you may want to create internal regulations to share the client's sensitive data only with relevant and key personnel. In the case of clients involved in legal

proceedings or clients in custodial settings, these protocols may be already in place and you may want to coordinate with the relevant agency to learn more about how to obtain or handle key information, without revealing sensitive data. As a general rule, you should only reveal the necessary information that may help others (e.g. other social workers or case managers) in their own work with the client. Sometimes, you may not be the practitioner involved in implementing the intervention and in this case you should share as much relevant information as possible with the case manager in charge of the implementation. However, if the information you gathered does not add anything, it is advisable you do not share that, to ensure you respect the client's trust in you. When researching on the client's background or his/her family's background, you may find yourself in a situation when you are not able to access personal and sensitive data, due to privacy or legal rules. You should adhere to the local legislation and avoid breaching the legal protocols. If you have a sufficient level of trust, you may obtain the information you need by directly asking the party involved. Gaining the consent would always be the advisable approach.



Active listening skills

People often want to be heard. Building a relationship where you are in an "active listening" mode will usually yield more effective results. The use of active listening, along with other effective communication strategies, can particularly assist with the early development of trust. It will also prove necessary for a productive relationship.⁸⁷ One clear example of how you can practice "active listening" is by using responsive questions, which are questions built on the client's answer. The objective is to go in-depth in specific areas, rather than aiming at covering many different subjects. Active listening would also allow you to recognize the client's positive deeds and plans and provide positive affirmations to pro-social information provided, which in turn may reinforce those thoughts⁸⁸.



Sensitive in language and approach

Avoid openly using controversial or judgemental language. Especially in the prevention space and for clients who are not explicitly and/or implicitly known to be involved in extremism and/or violent extremism, you should refrain from using words such as terrorism or violent extremism, criminal or anti-social etc. Simply using these words makes a judgement of the individual's behavior. In addition, even in the case of individuals who have been prosecuted, these labels are stigmatizing and could compromise trust. A useful strategy is to mirror the labels and words used by the client, and in cases where you are not sure – ask the client how she/he would describe a phenomenon or individual.



Accessible points of contact within the individual's groups of reference

In those cases where you cannot easily build trust – and therefore collect information – you may want to identify a **credible messenger** who could help you secure the relationship. This can include pro-social family members or friends – after obtaining the client's consent – , members of the extended family (with permission), and anyone else who has credibility and positive influence over the concerned individual⁸⁹. In some CVE programs, prison chaplains were found to be useful in building trust and in some community programs, former perpetrators of violence (including violent extremism) were influential. In other cases, the influential person was a teacher, a sports trainer etc. This is very specific to each individual.

When it is not easy to map the individual's network of pro-social influencers, to identify the most relevant family or community members to engage with, you may want to make use of Social Network Maps that you might have created with the client. The Reflexive Lifeline tool may also be particularly suitable, as it allows the client to mark problematic relationships, as well as the level of closeness he/she feels to certain family members in comparison to the level of

closeness they desire. Where possible, you should use this as a guideline for your plan to work with the client's family/friends. It is important that throughout the process of engaging with parents, family members, and teachers, you obtain an understanding of the culture and internal dynamics in order to tailor your approach on how to best engage with each of them. Finally, it should be noted that legal, ethical and security guidelines should be always followed. For example, if the family member or the client is a minor, there should be parental consent (or a legal guardian's consent) for engaging with the child and even for interviewing teachers and friends.

ENGAGEMENT IN PRACTICE

Having outlined the guiding principles for an ethical framework, what are the practical recommendations to prepare and conduct an engagement with a client? The following section describes some additional techniques you can adopt when building trust and engaging with an individual.



Mirroring:

One basic concept to consider when engaging with a client is a phenomenon called **mirroring**. Mirroring is something people usually do subconsciously by imitating another person's gestures, body language, and vocabulary.⁹⁰ When engaging with a client, the challenge is that this needs to be re-directed in being authentic and rooted in a genuine empathy for the individual. Mirroring is normally a natural behavior we all carry out in the course of positive interactions with others, but in the client-practitioner relationship, it can be particularly useful. This approach can be very counter-productive if not practiced carefully. Only experienced interviewers, who are able to genuinely feel empathy for the client, are recommended to apply this.

In those cases where you feel that it is challenging to connect in a sincere way, you may want to identify someone else who can approach the client and conduct the engagement. You may also want to make use of a "matching system" to find the practitioner that fits the best with the client. In general, it is always good practice to match the interviewer with the client. This will help you create a trusting environment. If the practitioner is not familiar with the vocabulary used by

the client, it is important that they research about it or let somebody else conduct the engagement. It is also important to note that “gender dynamics” are quite important, as some clients may be comfortable only with a specific gender. Gender-dynamics may also affect how the client perceives information, as well as the practitioner’s attitudes, language and behaviors. You may want to consult a gender specialist who can provide further support in understanding whether there are contextual gender dynamics that you need to take into account.

Generally it would be wise to conduct some preliminary research into the client’s environment and his/her cultural background. This will also help you challenge your own stereotypes about the client’s background and avoid you bring in biases in your engagement with him/her. The information will also help you understand whether you are the most suitable practitioner who “matches” the client. While “mirroring” is a difficult approach to master and embrace, the following elements provide useful and basic recommendations on what you can at the very least do, to ensure a successful engagement:



► BODY LANGUAGE

It is suggested not to adopt a body language that is very dissimilar from the client. For example, if the person is quiet and does not show emotions, you should avoid dramatic gestures. It is important to remember that your own body language can also be very revealing of your thoughts⁹¹. So, for example, if you fundamentally disagree with the client’s perspective, you should try not to show this in your body language or tone of voice. Self-reflection is important during this process and it is worthwhile working on role plays with your colleagues to establish what non-verbal clues you give without knowing it, and how to learn to be neutral in your non-verbal responses.



► VOCABULARY

Where possible, avoid using vocabulary and language that are not familiar for the client. You should try to use vocabulary similar to the client’s, only when it feels natural and you are comfortable with it. However, learning his/her vocabulary will at least make it easier for you to understand him/her. Vocabulary also encompasses tone of voice and speed when talking.

If you have a quiet person in front of you, you should not overwhelm the person with words. In addition, you should remember that *silence* is useful and it is not always necessary to fill the gaps – although you are the professional, resist the temptation to speak immediately if the client stops speaking. You remaining silent (for a few seconds) will encourage the client to say more⁹².



► POLITICAL, IDEOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS

When it comes to religious and political views, interactions with any individual must be done sensitively. Generally, people are drawn to others who seem to share similar religious and political views; we seek out similar people and reject ideas different from our own. Facts and evidence are often irrelevant to this issue and you will not convince the client of an error in this manner. Values are very often strongly held and challenging them is not welcomed. Doing so will only serve as a barrier to progress in the practitioner-client relationship. The priorities here are to avoid judgement and focus on the client’s narrative in a genuine way. Sometimes, clients may be curious about the practitioners’ viewpoints, especially after trust has been secured. In those cases, limited self-disclosure may be appropriate but arguments should be avoided. In some instances, expert religious or political scholars have been brought in to converse with clients involved in extremism and/or violent extremism specifically on the topic of ideology. This is not suitable in all cases but may be necessary where an individual feels that trust cannot be established with practitioners who do not understand his/her values and ideology. This latter point touches upon the issue of “credibility”. It is advisable that you learn more about core issues or perspectives, before initiating any conversation, as it is important to come across as a credible messenger. If this is not possible, you may need to involve an expert (e.g. religious and/or political scholar) who holds that credibility and authority when discussing a specific issue. It is not advisable that you initiate any conversations on these sensitive topics, if you do not possess knowledge and credibility within the community or group of reference.

Another approach comes from the field of conflict resolution. A basic concept when trying to resolve conflicts is to focus on the goals that both parties can agree on, without getting stuck in the solutions. A translation of this principle to interviewing practice

would be to identify political and/or religious goals that you can agree on, without getting drawn into discussions about *how* to reach those goals. You can also try to identify descriptions of some specific social or political problems that you can agree on. You do not need to discuss solutions since your only task at this stage is to collect information. Agreeing on goals and problem descriptions will help in building trust and you will have a better chance of getting the information you need. For instance, you may share the same concern for the community or economic situation in the country (even though you may have different solutions for the issues at stake). By agreeing on the concern for the situation, you will probably get the individual to talk about what he or she thinks is the solution.



► APPROACHING PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS

In order to build trust with familial and social circles, it may be useful to understand the parents' or other family members' situations, if this is legally possible and advisable. It is ethically important to clarify the objectives and the goals of your engagement with the family. As stated earlier, the focus should always be on individual needs and on helping the client reach a more pro-social life in accordance with his/her own capacities, and desires. This also needs to be established from the start when you talk to parents, relatives, and teachers. In this framework, you should not make promises or commit yourself to things that you cannot live up to.

Families themselves may also experience challenging circumstances, especially if it is known that their loved one may be associated with anti-social groups. Some of these families may be ostracized by the community or may feel a sense of alienation. Families may also live in precarious conditions and may struggle financially. In addition, in these circumstances families would likely receive frequent visits from police officers or security services, and it is important that your account for their distrust and fears. Some family members may not want to engage with you at first. Therefore, it is important you also take time in building trust with them. Offering yourself as a resource and avoiding considering them as a "source of information" for the particular case, is of critical importance. You should be as genuine, stating the clear objective of your engagement and framing

it in a positive manner. You should also be eager to help where you can. Sometimes, it may be helpful to connect with a "point of contact or gatekeeper", such as a friend, a neighbor or a relative, who can better introduce you as a reliable person. Finally, you should also address their fears and concerns where you can, and provide as much information as possible regarding their loved one and the specific circumstances affecting him/her. When pressed with questions, you should try to answer when you can, or connect the family to the relevant organization, if you do not know the answer. As mentioned before, you should also set clear boundaries and expectations and avoid falling into overpromising.

SUMMARY:

HOW TO BUILD TRUST AND COLLECT INFORMATION

In short, to summarize the basics of trust-building, information and data-collection:

If you want to help the client you need to be genuinely willing to help him/her. If you feel that you cannot help the client, then you should request another practitioner to handle the case.

The client should be treated with respect and any perception of hierarchy is counter-productive. At the same time, it is important to clarify boundaries and avoid to be perceived as a “friend” as this can lead to disappointments.

Practice patience: you will not retrieve all the information you need in one meeting with the client. Throughout the engagement, you may experience “setbacks” and would need to re-establish trust and a rapport.

In an effort to ensure efficiency, try to engage with the client in coordination with another practitioner who has a different style or comes from a different background than yours: It is possible that at least one of you will have success on trust-building.

Be as authentic as possible while respecting confidentiality and ensure you rely on your own professional training and guidelines.

Empathy is important. Putting yourself in the other person's shoes can help with building trust. Ask yourself questions like: "How would I have reacted in that situation?" When needed and advisable, you can also practice "self-disclosure" to enable a more genuine relationship with the client, in line with the security and safety protocols of your organization or country.

Be familiar with the concept of "mirroring" and learn more about how you can apply this approach in your vocabulary, body language and when discussing political/religious sentiments and/or interacting with family and community members. Challenge your own stereotypes and biases. Be mindful of gender, social and cultural norms and stereotypes in your work.

Give positive feedback on the client's past pro-social deeds and achievements.

Use non-judgmental questions and utilize one of the methods previously outlined, as needed (i.e. Open-ended questions, Reflexive Lifeline, Socratic Dialogue, Motivational Interviewing, and BNIM).

Do not correct the client's views and/or argue with him/her. Your objective is not to convince that he/she is wrong, but it is to build trust and gather as much information as possible to identify the client's critical needs.

Be familiar with your legal obligations to your client and the national authorities, including national and local confidentiality, data protection protocols and privacy laws.

Work to establish mechanisms and approaches on how to handle and/or share information with other colleagues, agencies and national authorities, since the very beginning.

THE FOUR STEPS OF A NEEDS AND STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT

The previous section outlined some general principles to build trust and adopt appropriate data-collection approaches with a client and/or his/her groups of reference. It provided theoretical and practical recommendations that you should take into account, as a practitioner. After establishing a certain degree of trust, you are ready to start the process of *Needs and Strengths Assessment*. This section will offer an organized and consequential methodology divided into four steps, ranging from collecting relevant information to performing the final assessment. Detailed information and specific templates per each Step, are provided in subsequent sections.



STEP 1:

Collecting the Information

- a. Personal Goals and/or Interests;
- b. History/Biography;
- c. Individual Skills and Competencies;
 - i. Education/Vocational Skills;
 - ii. Social Skills;
 - iii. Executive Functions;
- d. Family and Friends (Primary Group);
- e. Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context.



STEP 2:

Coding the Information



STEP 3:

Conducting the Needs and Strengths Assessment



STEP 4:

Planning for an Intervention



STEP 1: Collecting the information

Step one is to collect as much relevant information as possible. This can be done in preparation to your first meeting, during your meetings, or after your meetings, if the conversation prompts you to seek out specific information from third parties. At this stage you should not worry about interpreting the information, but you should be aware of the relevant **Domain** the information belongs to. Some of the questions will allow you to gain more information and knowledge on several other Domains. In fact, the first meeting should focus more on the introductions, trust-building, clarifying your role as much as possible, and expressing a desire to learn more about the client. Discussions about big issues or e.g. the client's concerning behaviors should be avoided in this circumstance, and the objective should solely be to reinforce mutual trust and confidence.

In the case of convicted terrorists, available information should be subtly presented, by avoiding judgmental language. That is, if the client is known to have been involved in violent extremism or has been convicted for terrorism offences, you may want to state this fact outwardly by simply stating that: "I am aware, from legal or community-based reports that you were involved in a network or group (by specifying the organization)." This may encourage the client to be more forthcoming about information overall.

On the other hand, if there is no clear evidence of the client being exposed to extremism or violent extremism, you should avoid mentioning the word "violent extremism", as this may be perceived as an accusation and jeopardize the trust-building process.

You should remember that there will be multiple meetings for the purpose of data collection, so the process is iterative; each meeting informs what will be discussed in the next. It is important to note that

clients may tell different stories once they open up as opposed to the initial narratives they were providing at the start of the engagement. This is often because they may not immediately tell the truth to people they do not trust. Therefore, it is critical for you to avoid considering the information gathered at the initial stage of the engagement as the "truth". In this context, it is also relevant to take into account the potential **social desirability bias**⁹³: in your first meetings with the client, he/she may potentially answer your questions in the way he/she thinks you expect them to be answered. Therefore, you would need to be patient and not take any answers as real information about the client's thoughts, behaviors or past experiences. Additional information can be easily captured by asking follow-up questions, but be sure to place the gathered information under the correct Domain.

In terms of recording information, it is useful if the templates are completed after the interview rather than during the process. Also, the information can often be correctly assigned retrospectively. The reason for this is that oftentimes the conversation may wander and it is not always clear what Domain is relevant and how one Domain is related to another. For this reason it is advisable to record conversations and/or to have a colleague taking notes- with the client's consent- so you can focus on the interpersonal dynamics of the conversation and on the client. It is very difficult to actively listen and take notes at the same time, unless there is a note-taker accompanying you. In these circumstances, it may be possible to explain to the client that having a recording would ensure that everything the client wishes to say will not be overlooked. However, it is important to use common sense: if recording may jeopardize trust, it should be avoided. Instead, it may be advisable, in such circumstances, that you review the details

and organize the information as soon as the session concludes, as this would also allow for planning for the next session and managing gaps in the narrative.

When you are entering data under specific Domains, it is useful to remember that information may well be entered more than once in multiple Domains. For example, when exploring the Domain *Personal Goals and/or Interests* by asking about how the client's personal goals can be achieved, you may also get information on *Individual Skills and Competencies: Executive Functions* (e.g. capacity for planning/organizing and coping skills). In this instance, it may be natural to ask follow-up questions about the client's plans to reach goals and what their obstacles are, but many of those answers should be noted down elsewhere. For example, past grievances should be noted down under *History/Biography*, but if it is associated with negative experiences with security forces or other representatives from the state, it should also be noted down under *Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context* because it relates to the social context. When exploring goals, feelings of marginalization can be voiced. Marginalization should be noted down under *Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context*, but how the person handles his/her negative feelings should be noted down under *Individual Skills and Competencies: Executive Functions* (e.g. coping skills). This process allows you to make connections between Domains and also get a sense of the complexity of the needs and the interactivity across the client's life.

When you are collecting information, it is also important that you keep the focus of the engagement to be client-centric. An engagement or interview and subsequent assessment should always focus on identifying the most important information, with the aim to then support the client to adopt a pro-social lifestyle in accordance with his/her own needs, capacities, and desires. Some practical recommendations include:

- ▶ When collecting information throughout the interview, you do not need to explore all the areas suggested as examples. You should also heavily contextualize the example questions, based on your geographical location, cultural context and the client's background (e.g. age, gender, level of education, religious/political background).

- ▶ To ensure a client-focused engagement, it is recommended you allow the client to lead the information gathering process, once direction has been provided by the practitioner. Prompts such as "could you tell me more about that?" can be added, or the practitioner can inform the client that "I would like us to revisit this later on as well." to indicate the importance of the topic.
- ▶ Repeatedly re-capturing the client's narrative can also be useful, as a client's "story" can change from what it was initially. Sometimes the narrative details can be recalled later in the process or be further elaborated on. That being said, it is essential to allow the first narrative to take the shape that the client prefers, as during this phase clients are also assessing how their "story" may impact their future (personally and legally).
- ▶ You should refrain from jumping to conclusions when conducting the engagement, especially when you are collecting information per each Domain. Instead, you should consider all Domains holistically at a later stage (Step 3). This includes any assumptions about whether a specific Domain represents a potential critical need.

Additional details on collecting information and on topics to address per each Domain is provided in the section: *Step 1 and 2: Engaging the Client Across the Five Domains*



STEP 2:

Coding the information

After each interaction with the client, the data collected should ideally be transcribed, reviewed, and then coded. Coding means assigning a specific value (*low, medium, high*) to the information provided by the client and exploring whether the information can lead to the conclusion that the overall Domain represents one of the client's potential needs. This is an iterative process and hence will need to be carried out multiple times – after each interaction with the client. In addition, information gathered from schools, police, and social workers can also be coded in this manner.

When you have finished recording all of the information available in the appropriate Domain, you are ready to conduct the coding process. Given that this assessment process is not based on an actuarial model, it is inherently subjective. It is vitally important that the client is involved in this process, and that you have his/ her buy-in. This is because, firstly, the analysis needs to be grounded and relevant to the client's life; and secondly, if this information is being used to inform a potential intervention, the client needs to agree with the analysis and be willing to work with you on proposed interventions.

As mentioned, coding is done by giving every Domain one out of three values – *low need, medium need, or high need*, with “low” being attributed to Domains that are less concerning for the client's life. There is no objective criteria that can be used to rank needs, only the subjective opinion of the practitioner and the insight of the client. Your role as a practitioner is to rank the specific Domain from low to high according to the available information provided. **Fig. 4** provides an example of a coding sheet for the Domain “**Individual Skills and Competencies**”. In order to assess whether this Domain (**Fig. 4**) represents a “need” (i.e. an area for potential intervention), you will need to gather information on the client's current skills and competencies through interviews and other data sources. If there is evidence that the client does not possess

sufficient functional competencies or totally lacks skills, then the overall Domain may be flagged as a “high need” for potential intervention, as the client may require support on acquiring functional skills and competencies. To better guide you in this task, there are examples of what might constitute *low, medium, or high need* for each specific Domain in the *Coding Sheet* at the end of every Domain section. Coding should be the first step in a process that will have to be revisited as progress is achieved (or not achieved). In this context, it is important to emphasize that **the notion of “needs” does not equate to what the client “wants” or thinks “he/she needs”**, as the client may not be aware of what his/her real needs are. What the client needs is elaborated through the analysis of available information regarding the specific Domain. Your role is to determine whether the available information can lead you to mark the overall Domain as a need, and if so, whether this is at a low, medium, or high level.

Additional details on coding information per each Domain are provided in the section: *Step 1 and 2: Engaging the Client Across the Five Domains*

CODING SHEET – Individual Skills and Competencies

Please select the appropriate rank with regard to the information you gathered. You can use the descriptions below the values to guide you in the selection. Please note that these only represent generic examples and not an exhaustive list.

You are required to contextualize the questions based on your client’s cultural context, language, gender, age, religious and educational background. Note that any information coded in this sheet does not lead to the automatic conclusion of the client being radicalized, involved into extremism and violent extremism and/or prone to recidivate

Low Need

The client seems to have basic understanding of how to organize complex activities and tasks, despite uncertain situations or contexts. He/she is not obsessed with negative experiences. The client seems to learn from personal challenges. The client makes some mistakes due to impulsive behavior or emotional decision-making.

Medium Need

The client can get things done when the necessity level is high enough. He/she regularly does things at the very last minute and does not seem to cope well with ambiguity. The client has some functional coping strategies but he/she also seems to have some dysfunctional coping strategies, like getting angry with others when stressed, or being prone to perceptions/feelings of victimhood. The client adopts confusing and contradictory behaviors.

High Need

The client is prone to anger outbursts, and makes multiple mistakes due to impulsiveness. The client is intolerant to ambiguity, uncertain contexts or situations. The client is preaching to others about what is absolutely right and wrong, and refuses to engage in any dialogue without escalating to anger or other dysfunctional behaviors. The client gets angry if he/she does not like the questions. The client becomes angry, frustrated, and irritated when talking about groups that are perceived as adversarial, without necessarily advocating for violent means. The client frequently lies, and seems to experience emotional struggles. The client gives up easily, and not even urgency can make them do the important things. Past failures are often blamed on others. The client has no tolerance for diverse opinions/beliefs. The client has no functional coping strategies, or he/she has many dysfunctional coping strategies.

Protective Factors

The client can organize thoughts and be focused if interested in or committed to something

The client has identified and regularly uses functional coping strategies to relieve stress and anger (exercising regularly, talking to friends, and devoting time to hobbies, meditation or self-reflection)

The client shows good capacity to develop complex plans, despite uncertain situations and is realistic on how to achieve them

Other _____

Fig 4.: Example of a Coding Sheet for the Domain “Individual Skills and Competencies: Executive Functions”

In the *Coding Sheet*, you will also have the opportunity to capture any **protective factors** pertaining to that specific Domain. Note that there is also space in the *Coding Sheet* for adding protective factors as you deem appropriate.

When coding, you should separate the protective factors from the rest of the information as much as possible. It is not until you perform the final *Needs and Strengths Assessment* (Step 3) across all the Domains, in coordination with the client, that you weigh scores (*low, medium, high*) attributed to each Domain and the existing protective factors, against each other. For example, if you deem that a specific Domain represents a *high need* for intervention, but at the same time there is a protective factor that you think could reduce that need to a *medium* or *low level*, this is relevant to note. As already mentioned, this process is inherently subjective. You may also ask input and feedback from other professionals who may be aware or working in tandem with you on the client's case. This would help you limit subjectivity. You should also be aware that circumstances

change, and this analysis is a snapshot in time. For example, protective factors can be temporary, and so you should also consider how static the protective factors really are (e.g. a pro-social relative dies). Therefore, you should focus on data collection and coding in the first instance and carry out the analysis thereafter. Sometimes, it can be hard to differentiate amongst Domains, in relation to where it is best to place a specific piece of information. In these situations, it is important to remember that the Domains are subjective and interlinked, **artificially separating elements** that are not always possible to separate. You should try to separate the information per Domain, but you should also bear in mind that they usually overlap and sometimes it is not possible to create a neat separation. Generally speaking, it may be advisable to write down multiple times the same information as this will practically help with the final assessment.





STEP 3: Conducting the Needs and Strengths Assessment

When you have completed the coding process across all the available Domains, in consultation with the client, you should transfer the “ need value” attributed to each Domain, as well as the identified protective factors, to the *Needs and Strengths Assessment Sheet*, included after the Domain sections in this manual and in **Fig. 5** below.

Additional details on how to perform the final assessment is provided in the section: Step 3: *The Needs and Strengths Assessment Process*

VALUES FROM THE CODING SHEETS				PROTECTIVE FACTORS	CRITICAL NEEDS
L (Low), M (Medium), H (High)	L	M	H		
Personal Goals and/or Interests					
History/Biography					
Individual Skills and Competencies:					
Education/Vocational Skills					
Social Skills					
Executive Functions					
Family and Friends (Primary Group)					
Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context					

Fig 5.: The Needs and Strengths Assessment Sheet.

The *Needs and Strengths Assessment* process should include the information from the coding sheets for each Domain. This includes also the transcription of the available protective factors you identified per each Domain. Secondly, you should holistically evaluate all the information. At this stage, you can identify the client's critical need(s), if any. The value of "critical need" is attributed to the Domains for which an intervention is deemed to be necessary. The attribution of "critical value" is based on the examination of the Domains previously marked as "high" in the coding sheets, and for which there is no compensation by any existing protective factors from the specific Domain or in other Domains. The Domains marked as "critical needs" have the highest potential to shape the client's future and life. This concept is further explained in the section: *Step 3: The Needs and Strengths Assessment process*. It should be noted that there may not be any Domains marked as critical needs identified, as a result of this process. This simply means that the information available does not lead to the necessity of an immediate intervention at the present time, in line with the principle of **just enough, just in time, just for you**. If an intervention

is not needed, you should wonder whether the case may be deemed as "close". This is also an important difference with risk assessment processes in which, by their own logic, cases may never really close. However, it should be noted that information and situations may rapidly change and that there is no guarantee that there could not be the need for an intervention in the future. In these ambiguous cases, you may want to consult with other colleagues and professionals, to assess whether it is helpful to monitor the client's case.

In order to identify Domains as potential critical needs, you are requested to use your own professional judgement in conjunction with the results from the coding process and in consultation with the client. If you identify several critical needs, the priority should be to focus on the realistic Domains that can lead to positive results, initially, without being exceptionally challenging to the client. Buy-in will be gradual and will be a process of learning for both the client and yourself.

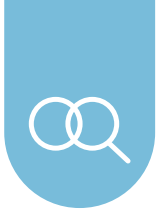


STEP 4: Planning for an intervention

After identifying the Domains marked as critical needs, as well as the client's existing protective factors, you are ready to plan for an intervention. As previously mentioned, the prioritization of the intervention should be based on the Domains marked as critical needs that are defined as those which are not compensated by any protective factors and have the highest potential to shape the client's life. When planning for an intervention, you should also consider the existing and available resources you have to determine the best course of action. This is particularly true if you realize that there are several interventions to be made and if prioritization is required. Finally, you should always ensure your client's

buy-in in the process and determine, in consultation with him/her, what the first immediate Domain for an intervention should be. This is not always easy, but it should be the aspirational model to ensure success.

It may be a good idea to start with interventions and objectives that could be more easily achievable by the client. This would generate positive changes and contribute to the client's self-agency within the process. Additional considerations and information on how to plan and mobilize resources for an intervention are provided in the section: *Step 4: Planning for an Intervention*.



STEP 1 AND 2: Engaging the Client across the Five Domains

After providing a general overview of the Four Steps for conducting a *Needs and Strengths Assessment* and the subsequent intervention, this section will provide specific advice, techniques and templates to collect information through interviews and personal engagement **per each of the five Domains** (please consult the section: *A Brief Overview of the Domains of Investigation*, for a general introduction to the Domains.) As a reminder, specific areas and topics should be explored with the client in **Step 1** of the process (*Collecting the Information*), and only after you established a sufficient level of trust and mutual confidence.

As mentioned in the section “*Trust building and Data Collection: Key Principles and Practical Recommendations*”, it is important to use an “open-ended approach” which is bound to an ethical framework. You would need to ask appropriate questions that may help the client tell his/her story; you may also want to utilize the Socratic Dialogue, the BNIM approach, the MI technique or the Reflexive Lifeline tool, which may be particularly helpful in the case of clients who may not be able to articulate well their experiences in a verbal manner. This section will also provide detailed guidance on how to approach **Step 2** of the process (*Coding the Information*), by offering specific templates and examples of coded information per each Domain.

Before any real engagement you should also research the client’s personal and cultural background to be aware of any sensitivity that may jeopardize the engagement. If appropriate, you may want to consult available information from other agencies or institutions on the specific case. Interagency

This is the start of the process: Step 1 focuses on engaging and interviewing the client and collecting as much information as possible across the Five Domains. In Step 2, you should then code the collected information and identify the client’s general needs by ranking each Domain (*low, medium or high*). In this Step you should also capture the client’s protective factors.

coordination is important to ensure you avoid duplication of efforts. However, you may also prefer an approach where you do not receive any preliminary information, to avoid any personal bias against the client.

Finally, although you are in the realm of interviews, you should refrain from any perception of “interrogating” the client. The questions and the answers should be framed in a fluid context and conversation, without rushing the client in providing a response. In your first engagement, you will likely introduce yourself, rather than addressing big issues. You will then proceed in transparently sharing your objectives in a sensitive manner. After a certain level of trust is established and you have ensured the client’s collaboration, you will then share clear expectations and boundaries, without overpromising on what you can do to help the client.



DOMAIN 1: Personal Goals and/or Interests

For this Domain, you want to find out if the client has any **pro-social** or **anti-social** goals and/or interests; however this should be broken down into more realistic objectives. Starting with personal interest is a useful way to begin this conversation. Goals, interests, etc. can be either anti-social or pro-social, and it is important not to show any judgement on what the client says. In the case of clients incarcerated for terrorism offences, it is important to adopt an open-ended approach and not make any assumptions. Merely being suspected or prosecuted for violent extremist charges does not mean that an individual's needs are known or can be inferred, so you should not draw any hasty conclusions about potential anti-social goals or interest. As stated earlier, the overarching objective of the engagement and the *Needs and Strengths Assessment* is to identify the Domains representing a **critical need for intervention** and possibly give support to the client to adopt pro-social pathways, regardless of his/her identity or personal history.

It is also important to remember that voicing understanding or sympathizing with violent solutions to achieve ideological objectives does **not** automatically mean that an individual is prepared to adopt or use violence. Repeating slogans or discussing these narratives does not mean that the individual is always committed to the use of violence⁹⁴. In this context, it is important to note that individuals who are potentially or actually radicalized are not always open to talking about their beliefs and plans. Not voicing extremist ideas does not necessarily mean that the person is not involved in extremism or violent extremism either.

Another important reminder is that individuals can be contradictory. Information may sometimes be confusing and individuals can present several Domains as competing needs. For example, oftentimes individuals may believe that involvement in an extremist or violent extremist group is a pro-social goal (e.g. getting involved for humanitarian

reasons, to relieve the suffering of individuals in a war zone). Individuals who are willing to join these groups sometimes genuinely want to do something *good* or participate in what they believe is a good cause. This should be identified during an assessment and also emphasized when developing an intervention for the client.

Having said that, should these motives be expressed as a "reason" for participating into an extremist and/or violent extremist group, this may be considered as an indication to introduce alternative ways of participating in a socially acceptable and productive activity (pro-social involvement alternatives can then be generated). These can be both short term goals (participating at the community level) and long term goals (seeking skills that would allow one to develop a career related to a "good" cause, such as health technician, nurse, emergency care services, or even a well-informed religious and/or political scholar, etc.).

Key Principles for Building Trust and Data Collection- a Reminder:

In this Domain, you should use the relevant techniques and principles introduced in the section: *Trust building and Data Collection: Key Principles and Practical Recommendations*. Information about interests is usually the easiest to discuss. You should spend some time on collecting this information, as this will also help in building trust. You should ask questions about how the client thinks or feels, and how he/she plans to achieve his/her goals. If you start arguing or instructing the client with your views, you will not get the information you need.

Personal Goals/Interest- Areas you should investigate:

- ▶ What are the client's interests?
- ▶ What type of social issues is the client interested in?
- ▶ What are the interests or hobbies that the client shares with his/her family or friends?
- ▶ What are the interests or hobbies that the client focused on in the past or when he/she was a child?
- ▶ How would the client like to be remembered?
- ▶ What dreams of the future did the client have when he/she was younger?
- ▶ Where does the client want to be in 5 years' time?

It is important to divide the questions based on your available time and the level of trust you have already gained. For instance, data on the client's interests, hobbies, and daily routine may be information that are relatively easy to discuss. Conversely, capturing data on the client's stance on social issues and his/her relationship with the family may require a certain level of trust you would first need to establish.

You may also utilize the Reflexive Lifelines tool – discussed in the section: *Practical Information-Gathering and Building Trust Techniques*- especially when it is not possible to directly ask certain questions to a particular group of individuals, for sensitivity reasons⁹⁵.

Follow-up

Once you have established a dialogue with the client, you may proceed with follow-up **responsive questions**. These questions are useful because they show the client that you are actively listening, while also allowing the client to guide the conversation to a certain degree. Unexpected information may emerge in this way. Such questions will also capture information concerning other Domains, such as *Individual Skills and Competencies (Executive Functions)* and *Family and Friends (Primary Group)*.

- ▶ If you managed to get the client to state a pro-social goal, then you can ask about how he/she would achieve this goal. The same goes for anti-social goals. You should first try to get information about the pro-social goals, if there are any. The client's answers to this question will provide information about *Executive Functions* and how realistic he/she is about reaching his/her goals.
- ▶ What are the main obstacles for the client to reach the stated goal? The answers to this question will inform you about *Executive Functions*, responsibility, and potential radicalization if the person is known to have been exposed to extremism or violent extremism.

For follow-up questions related to the role of the client's social groups in helping with his/her goals, you may want to resort to a Social Network Map or directly ask the question, if you feel it is feasible to do so.

Exploring this Domain can also give you information relating to:

- ▶ History/Biography;
- ▶ Individual Skills and Competencies (Executive Functions);
- ▶ Family and Friends (Primary Group).



Coding Sheet - Personal Goals and/or Interests

Please select the appropriate rank with regard to the information you gathered. You can use the descriptions below the values to guide you in the selection. Please note that these only represent generic examples and not an exhaustive list.

You are required to contextualize the questions based on your client's cultural context, language, gender, age, religious and educational background. Note that any information coded in this sheet does not lead to the automatic conclusion of the client being radicalized, involved into extremism and violent extremism and/or prone to recidivate

Low Need

The client seems to be interested in pro-social goals and/or interests, but has difficulty in articulating them. In this section, you can also code whether your client has some pro-social goals, and if he/she voices some interests, past or present, but he/she has no plans to reach these goals or pursue these interests.

Medium Need

The client seems to be interested in pro-social goals and/or interests, but has difficulty in articulating them. He/she has unrealistic plans for reaching them or there are some structural barriers to achieving these goals (e.g. lack of the required level of skills or education)

High Need

The client has no pro-social goals or interests at all, or voicing anti-social goals and interests, particularly with realistic plans to achieve these. The client seems apathetic towards life and seems to have little hope for the future.

Protective Factors

- ▶ Realistic views on achieving pro-social goals and/or interests
- ▶ Active and/or consistent pursuit of pro-social goals (any example would render a mark)
- ▶ Strong interest in realistic and clearly-articulated pro-social goals/interests.

- ▶ Other _____

Fig 6: Coding Sheet - Personal Goals and/or Interests



DOMAIN 2: History/ Biography

History/Biography refers to all life experiences that have significantly shaped the client in some way. Personal experiences are usually an important source of information to investigate the client's habits and usual reactions in times of crisis. It can also give information about any past negative influences or pro-social influences as well as dreams and plans at young age, which may be revived for the future. However, it is also important to realize that certain information from the client's past may be sensitive and trigger his/her emotions. The client may also be unable to verbally explain some of his/her past circumstances, potentially due to traumatic experiences. The client may also feel shame about certain actions or believes from the past. In these cases, it is advisable to utilize visuals and graphic tools such as the Reflexive Lifeline tool or adopt the BNIM approach, which may make the client more at ease. Through the use of these approaches, the client may provide information about past experiences, which would be otherwise very demanding to explain. The Reflexive Lifeline tool may also reinforce the client's sense of agency in the process, which in turn helps to progress in the process.

Key Principles for Building Trust and Data Collection- a Reminder:

As mentioned, this Domain touches upon very personal experiences. Therefore, you should start by asking for positive past experiences. As a reminder, you should resort to the techniques from the section: *Trust building and Data Collection: Key Principles and Practical Recommendations*.

Also, when exploring the Domain *Individual Skills and Competencies* (specifically experiences with school and educational/vocational skills), there may be a possibility that the client will share both positive and negative past experiences. If that is the case, remember to also note down that information under this specific Domain. As mentioned, you should let the client drive the process and let him/her talk about his/her experiences at his/her own pace.

History/Biography- Areas you should investigate:

- ▶ The client's positive past experiences and the moments he/she feel a sense of pride or satisfaction.
- ▶ The client's negative/ traumatic past experiences and the moments he/she feel a sense of dissatisfaction.
- ▶ The client's childhood in school, in the family and in his/her groups of reference
- ▶ The client's point of reference in his/her childhood or the role model.

Many of the aforementioned areas of investigation may be particularly demanding. You should use your professional judgement and focus on a limited number of areas. Sometimes asking the "direct question" can also be counter-productive, as the client may not be able to articulate well his/her past, especially if there are traumatic experiences involved as well. For this reason, as mentioned, it may be particularly helpful here to resort to the Reflexive Lifeline tool, which may ensure the client's self-agency in the process and allow him/her to share what he/she is comfortable with, in a non-verbal way.

Although you want to explore negative experiences, you should not ask about these directly unless you have gained a high level of trust. Some of the information could be gathered from school teachers, social workers, friends or family members. For individuals convicted and serving jail sentences, it may be easier for you to access the information, especially if you are legally mandated to work on the case. Remember that it is not always appropriate and possible for you to explore this option, especially if the individual being assessed is a minor or has not been referred by anyone and is not convicted or under investigation. You should abide by an ethical framework as discussed in section: *Guiding Principles for an Ethical Framework*, and carefully evaluate

whether the involvement of third parties could actually disrupt the relationship with the client. In case of doubts, it is preferable not to gather the information if it puts the relationship with the individual at risk.

Some areas of investigation (not actual questions) for data-collection on negative experiences:

- ▶ Has the client ever witnessed violence? Within the family? Amongst friends?
- ▶ Has the client been subject to violence? Where? By whom?
- ▶ Has the client been hurt physically or emotionally by another person? Where? By whom?
- ▶ Has the client physically or emotionally hurt someone else?
- ▶ Has the client been humiliated by others?
- ▶ Has the client humiliated someone else? At home? Other places?
- ▶ Has the client experienced death in the family or amongst friends?
- ▶ Has the client had negative experiences with security forces, police or other representatives of the state?
- ▶ What does the client think about failure? What does failure mean to him/her? Has the client experienced failures?
- ▶ Has the client been exposed to any addictions or substance abuse or belonged to circles in where substances are used?
- ▶ Has the client experienced Intergenerational issues?

Witnessing or being subjected to violence at a young age might be predictive of anti-social behavior (as mentioned earlier), if there are no evident existing protective factors that can mitigate this circumstance. Another strong predictor might be if the client used violence against or humiliated others before the age of 13⁹⁶. This Domain should always

be analyzed together with the domain *Individual Skills and Competencies – Executive Functions* (i.e. **coping strategies** and the individuals' capacity for **resilience**). Coping skills are very important when it comes to adversarial events in an individual's life; remember that you should note down the identified negative experiences and coping skills in the two different Domains they belong to.

Follow-up:

As mentioned, you can also follow up with **responsive** questions that may be able to analyze in depth those issues that the client has brought up. You should be ready to respond to issues that arise in the spur of the moment and are not in your interview schedule.

- ▶ If you have managed to collect information on the client's negative experiences, you can ask about how he/she usually manages these. In this specific case, you may want to resort to the Reflexive Lifeline tool if the client has challenges in verbally explaining himself/herself. It is also important that you integrate the information gained in the Social Network Map and in the Domain: *Family and Friends (Primary Group)*.

Exploring this Domain can also give you information belonging to:

- ▶ Individual Skills and Competencies (Executive Functions);
- ▶ Family and Friends (Primary Group);
- ▶ Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context.



Coding Sheet - History/Biography

Please select the appropriate rank with regard to the information you gathered. You can use the descriptions below the values to guide you in the selection. Please note that these only represent generic examples and not an exhaustive list.

You are required to contextualize the questions based on your client’s cultural context, language, gender, age, religious and educational background. Note that any information coded in this sheet does not lead to the automatic conclusion of the client being radicalized, involved into extremism and violent extremism and/or prone to recidivate

Low Need

The client has not witnessed violence or been subjected to violence, humiliations or any other extremely negative experiences. The client experienced few adversarial events in life. There are examples of positive experiences in the client’s childhood or immediate past.

Medium Need

The client witnessed violence, or has been subjected to verbal abuse, physical violence and/or other extremely negative occurrences but not on a regular basis. The client used violence against others on some occasions. There are not many positive experiences in the client’s childhood or immediate past.

High Need

The client has experienced violence, significant traumatic events, deaths of important family members or friends, as well as several humiliating events or other types of extremely negative experiences. The client used some violence against others on several occasions. The client is showing bitterness when talking about negative experiences and blames others even for his/her own anti-social behavior. In this category, you should also score clients who have shown anti-social behavior at an early age (before the age of 13). The client also expresses frustration indicating social grievances and blames society for his/her own problems. There are very few positive experiences in the client’s childhood or immediate past.

Protective Factors




- ▶ Voicing positive achievements that the client feels proud of
- ▶ Sharing several positive and influential experiences from the past
- ▶ Sharing positive past experiences with past role models (e.g. teachers, family members)
- ▶ Others: _____

Fig 7: Coding Sheet- History/Biography



DOMAIN 3: Individual Skills and Competencies

As the realm of an individual's skills and competencies is vast, this Domain is divided into three subcategories:

-  1. **education/ vocational skills;**
-  2. **social skills;**
-  3. **executive functions.**

These three sub-categories are very much interlinked. In fact, although educational skills and intellectual abilities are sometimes correlated, this is not always the case. Notably, you should not automatically assume that poor (academic) results comes from a lack of intelligence. As a matter of fact, when children fail in school - even though they possess the necessary intelligence - it may be for instance because of 1) the lack of social skills, 2) inadequate executive functions, and 3) poor-quality or ineffective teachers or education systems. Therefore, you should not have biases or assumptions regarding the client's level of intellectual abilities, when assessing his/her academic or professional performances. The outcome depends on other issues, including social issues or lack of coping mechanisms. This section will provide an overview of these three inter-connected subcategories, with the aim to provide the overall picture of an with a client's skills and competencies.



▶ **EDUCATION/VOCATIONAL SKILLS:**

In a social context where extremist recruiters build their communication strategies and propaganda to prey on individuals' gaps in educational or professional skills, it is crucial that you understand the client's educational or professional background as much as possible to ensure you are effective in providing alternatives to fill this gap (if relevant) that may otherwise be filled by anti-social groups.

If possible, you should also investigate if there are any signs of disorder(s) that could affect the individual's learning process. You might be able to access medical records or ask family members, if you have the client's consent and/or if you are legally mandated to do so. If you do not have background information, ask the relevant school teacher or employer (past or present) and what they think of the client's school performance, vocational training experience or job performance. Remember to assure the client's consent and/or to comply with local regulations on data protection protocols and privacy laws.

Key Principles for Building Trust and Data Collection- a Reminder:

Use relevant techniques from the section: *Trust building and Data Collection: Key Principles and Practical Recommendations* to include the Reflexive Lifeline tool and the Social Network Map. As with the other Domains, this may touch upon very personal experiences and you will not get the information unless you have established a certain degree of trust.

Education/Vocational Skills - Areas you should investigate:

- ▶ How is/was the client's overall experience in school or professional settings?
- ▶ What school has/did the client attend?
- ▶ Has the client attended any vocational trainings?
- ▶ What does the client think about school or his/her work place?
- ▶ What does the client think about his/her current or past job?
- ▶ What is the ideal job according to the client?

- ▶ What does the client think about studying further or receiving vocational training?
- ▶ What subjects does/did the client like?
- ▶ What subjects does/did the client think are/were not interesting or difficult?
- ▶ How many friends does/did the client make in school, workplace or during vocational trainings?
- ▶ What does the client think about the teachers/employers/educators?
- ▶ What does/did the teachers or trainers think about the client?
- ▶ How many of the past teachers, employers or trainers is the client still in touch with?
- ▶ How many school friends or former colleagues is the client still in touch with?

If you are not able to cover these aspects in a direct interview – as can be the case - you should still consider these questions and use them to drive your research, as much as possible. You might be able to access the information in alternative ways, including public records, accessible education reports, public social media profiles, etc. You should abide by the relevant ethical framework of your own organization and ensure you comply with privacy and data protection protocols.

Finally, it is also important to capture the client’s capacity of logical reasoning. In this sense, you may want to utilize elements of the Socratic Dialogue to assess the client’s capacity in explaining his/her ideas and beliefs as related to his/her behavior and actions.

Follow-up

As mentioned, you can also follow up with **responsive** questions to explore and capture information on *social skills*, which is the second sub-category of this Domain. Usually, school, workplaces or any educational setting is the primary arena for friendship and for learning to co-operate with others. In this section, you can identify any positive or negative role models, whether they are past or present. You will find below some examples of follow-up questions that might help capture any existing grievances and feelings of marginalization. You may also be able to capture

whether these feelings are being “intercepted” by someone (e.g. **anti-social** groups such as violent extremist groups as well as **pro-social** groups). The questions will also assess *executive functions, coping skills*, and if there are any positive or negative role models in the individual’s life (Domain: *Family and Friends (Primary Group)*).

- ▶ If you managed to persuade the individual to share some negative experiences, you can ask how he/she managed those experiences:
 - ▶ Did he/she have anyone to talk to about it with?
 - ▶ What does he/she think about school or the educational setting?

The information may inform you about the client’s sense of responsibility, different coping skills, as well as the ability to reflect on past experiences in a reasonable manner. Again, it is fundamental to understand that you should avoid overwhelming the client with too many topics or questions. You should pick-up relevant topics and integrate them in a fluid conversation.

Exploring this Domain can also give you information relating to:

- ▶ History/Biography;
- ▶ Individual Skills and Competencies (Executive Functions);
- ▶ Individual Skills and Competencies (Social Skills);
- ▶ Family and Friends (Primary Group).



Coding Sheet - Educational/Vocational Skills

Please select the appropriate rank with regard to the information you gathered. You can use the descriptions below the values to guide you in the selection. Please note that these only represent generic examples and not an exhaustive list.

You are required to contextualize the questions based on your client's cultural context, language, gender, age, religious and educational background. Note that any information coded in this sheet does not lead to the automatic conclusion of the client being radicalized, involved into extremism and violent extremism and/or prone to recidivate.

Low Need

The client has/had some results in educational or professional settings and/or the ability to participate in educational activities. The client possesses limited skills that could be used in professional settings. The client experienced some issues throughout his/her educational, professional or vocational career.

Medium Need

The client has some trouble in school, other educational settings, or workplace and did not seem to find ultimate solutions or strategies to overcome these challenges. The client does not have very strong educational or working skills.

High Need

Dropped out of school, workplace and/or educational settings and/or showing complete lack of interest in educational and/or vocational activities. The client is currently not enrolled in any educational course, not planning for it, and not planning to look for a job.

Protective Factors

▶ Good results in and commitment to school/workplace, and/or liking school, workplace

▶ Having some vocational skills or talents or marketable skills

▶ Having a stable source of income

▶ Other: _____

Fig 8: Coding Sheet- Education/Vocational Skills



► SOCIAL SKILLS

Social skills are context-based, change over time, and are linked to the developmental stage of an individual (e.g. what is normal in childhood is not always normal in adolescence, etc.). The main areas you should explore for the purpose of this Domain are “co-operation with others, introspection, and responsibility”. Also, you may explore what he/she likes to do with friends, and what they talk about. Personality can also play a role in this, so you should also understand whether you are dealing with an extroverted person or an introverted one. As a general rule, research has shown that **pro-social** friends and a pro-social social network helps in building **resilience** towards adversarial events⁹⁷. It could also be that the client has a lot of pro-social friends on the Internet⁹⁸ or in other countries/regions/cities. Therefore, you should also explore this option. You can also ask about his/her view on friendship, what constitutes a friend, how he/she knows that someone is a friend, and what friends are for. For these latter questions, you may want to use the technique of the Socratic Dialogue, which focuses on discussing concepts and topics.

Introspection is important here as it will provide you with an insight into whether the client is capable of reviewing his/her own behavior, how he/she thinks about his/her interactions with others, as well as how he/she thinks about and analyze his/her own behavior as opposed to other people’s behavior. This will provide information on how the client perceives himself/herself in groups; how he/she co-operates with others and if the client can reflect on his/her own involvement in conflict.

These latter issues can also be assessed through your discussion with other sources of information. Notably, information on the relationships with others (family, peer groups, etc.) will also give an indication of the client’s characteristics and behavior in this Domain. It is also possible that the client may interact differently with different social groups (for example, interactions with authority figures is likely to be very different from that with peer group or trusted others).

Key Principles for Building Trust and Data Collection- a Reminder:

As for the other Domains, you should use the relevant information from the section *Trust building*

and *Data Collection: Key Principles and Practical Recommendations*. Again, you should resort to all the available and appropriate tools, such as The Social Network Map, the BNIM and/or the Reflexive Lifeline tool:

Social Skills - Areas you should investigate:

- Who are the closest individuals to the client (past/ or present)?
- How does the client interact with the aforementioned individuals?
- How would the client typically resolve conflicts with others?
- How often does the client think he/she is right in arguments with other people?
- How often does the client think he/she is wrong in arguments with other people?
- Can the client reflect on his/her own behavior?
- What does the client think about people who are very different from him/her (socially/culturally)?
- What does the client think about people who disagree with his/her opinions? How does he/she interact with these people?
- Does the client learn from personal challenges or is there often somebody else to blame?
- What prevalent emotions does the client feel when at home/school/ work place?
- How would the client describe himself/herself?
- How does the client think his/her friends would describe him/her?
- You also want to explore the client’s capacity for co-operation. Is the client a team-player? Does he/she like to work in team with others?
- What activities does the client like to do with his/her friends?

- ▶ Does the client find it easier to make friends online, over the internet?
- ▶ What does the client like to do in his/her free time? Does he/she participate in any activity in the community?
- ▶ Are there memorable/funny/challenging experiences that the client shared with his/her friends and/or in school/ workplace?

Some of these areas can be cross-checked with the information gathered in the Domain *History/Biography*, as there could be relevant information from the past that could give data about any of the aforementioned topics. In this context, you can review your notes in relation to the client's past experiences involving cooperation with others.

Exploring this Domain can also give you information related to:

- ▶ History/Biography;
- ▶ Individual skills and Competencies (Executive Functions);
- ▶ Family and Friends (Primary Group).





Coding Sheet - Social Skills

Please select the appropriate rank with regard to the information you gathered. You can use the descriptions below the values to guide you in the selection. Please note that these only represent generic examples and not an exhaustive list

You are required to contextualize the questions based on your client’s cultural context, language, gender, age, religious and educational background. Note that any information coded in this sheet does not lead to the automatic conclusion of the client being radicalized, involved into extremism and violent extremism and/or prone to recidivate.

Low Need

The client seems to mostly have meaningful friendships online and/or offline, although these may not be stable and/or contacts may be limited.

Medium Need

The client has relationships online or offline, but has a tendency of getting into conflicts with others. The client voices some negative sentiments about the shortcomings of others. These may include friends, family and social context as an excuse for his/her own failures. The client is usually very critical towards his/her own situation and is unable to see positive sides.

High Need

The client seems isolated; he/she has few or no friends both online or offline, or has primarily anti-social friends online or offline. The client seems to spend a lot of time alone (i.e. “hard-to-reach individual”) or seems to get into conflicts with others all the time. The client is rigid in his/her thinking and is not able to positively interact with groups with different opinions or groups belonging to other cultures, political affiliations, religions, or nationalities. The client is unwilling to have a dialogue with anyone who belongs to groups perceived as adversarial. The client becomes angry, frustrated, and irritated when talking about groups that are perceived as adversarial, without necessarily advocating for violent means. The client blames others for all kind of misfortunes. In school, the client is or was often in conflict with others. If of working age, he/she has been fired several times because of difficulties in co-operating with others.

Protective Factors

- ▶ Significant and active social network of positive influencers with whom the client has functional, meaningful and/or frequent contacts.
- ▶ Able to cooperate with others and to see both sides of an argument
- ▶ Able to see own involvement in conflicts
- ▶ Able to maintain relation with people who have different opinions/backgrounds
- ▶ Other: _____

Fig 9: Coding Sheet- Social Skills



▶ EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

This sub-category, completes the Domain: *Individual Skills and Competencies*. Executive functions encompass several areas that can provide information about the client's capacity to handle life situations. In short, executive functions refer to the client's cognitive capacity and may include:

- ▶ Planning, decision making, problem solving skills;
- ▶ Action sequencing, task assignment and organizational skills;
- ▶ The effortful and persistent pursuit of goals, inhibition of competing impulses;
- ▶ Flexibility in goal selection, and goal-conflict resolution.

The skills needed to carry out executive functions may include the good use of language; capacity for judgment; capacity for abstraction and concept formation; logical reasoning. These functions can be accurately measured using clinical assessment tools. While this is beyond the scope of this manual, it may be worth considering whether a mental health professional can provide some useful inputs here. If you have concerns about any of the executive functions outlined above, you can seek "a clinical assessment of executive functions" to complement your analysis.

However, it is useful to consider how the following abilities- that are linked to executive functions - might impact the client's identification of his/her needs or the strategy he/she may seek to meet these needs.

There are three main areas you may want to explore:

1. The person's tolerance of ambiguity;
2. The person's capacity for coping with negative experiences and demands;
3. The person's capacity for impulse control and ability to regulate emotions.

It is relevant to investigate the client's **tolerance for ambiguity**, which is the extent to which an individual is comfortable with unpredictability, conflicting

directions, and multiple demands at the same time. Recent research demonstrated that the more an individual is "tolerant towards the uncertain", the more likely he/she will engage in pro-social behavior⁹⁹. Conversely, the more the client is rigid in thinking and behavior and unable to cope with stressful and demanding situations, the more likely he/she will adopt dysfunctional strategies. In this context, "tolerance for ambiguity" and "the client's coping strategies" are best explored by asking about previous challenges and the client's attitude towards them. You can also explore what the client does to recover from stress and negative experiences. Does the client adopt any functional strategies that give some pleasure and stress relief, or are the coping strategies dysfunctional ones (e.g. drug taking or victimhood)?

Finally, information on the individual's impulse control and ability to regulate emotions can be accurately captured in a clinical assessment, but it might also be useful to observe and make note of the client's behavior in an interview setting or via observation. For example, it may be useful if the client tends to adopt a "black and white" logical thinking. While these observations do not serve to evaluate executive functions, understanding an individual's demeanor can help in tailoring the interview to suit his/her personal preferences.

Key Principles for Building Trust and Data Collection- a Reminder:

You should always use relevant techniques and principles from the section: *Trust building and Data Collection: Key Principles and Practical Recommendations*. You may have gathered some information about the client's executive functions when exploring other Domains. Since this area is difficult to explore by asking direct questions, it is important that you adopt a "direct observation strategy" and assess how the client seems to behave and cope with challenges or challenging topics over time. Socratic Dialogue, Motivational Interviewing or Reflexive Lifeline can also help you gain information about the client's executive functions.

Executive Functions- Areas you should investigate

- ▶ Does the client find it difficult to carry out a task that involves multiple steps?

- ▶ What happens if there are barriers to finishing or if his/her plan was inaccurate - can the client adapt?
- ▶ What motivates the client to initiate or complete a task? Can the client only focus on tasks when he/she is interested in the tasks/activities?
- ▶ Does the client get obsessed with negative experiences?
- ▶ How would the client describe himself/herself?
- ▶ How would the client think his/her friends would describe him/her?
- ▶ How does the client behave in a stressful situation?
- ▶ When faced with a challenge, what is the client's most likely reaction? Can the client give any example?
- ▶ How would the client describe his/her ability to handle difficult situations?
- ▶ Capacity for impulse control: in this context you can explore whether the client has ever made a decision that he/she later regretted, and how often this happens. Impulsiveness and struggling with concentrating can also be assessed by observation during the interviews and engagements.

Exploring this Domain can also give you information related to:

- ▶ History/Biography;
- ▶ Family and Friends (Primary Group);
- ▶ Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context;
- ▶ Individual Skills and Competencies (Social Skills).

Follow-up:

- ▶ Other question you should take into account pertain to the following:
- ▶ Capacity for coping with negative experiences: you could add questions about **stress**:
 - ▶ Where and when the client might experience stress;
 - ▶ What the client usually does to feel better when stressed or angry;
 - ▶ Does the client have functional coping strategies like taking breaks and talking to friends, or dysfunctional ones like getting anger outburst etcetera?
 - ▶ Does the client take responsibility for failures and losing his/her temper, or are other people always/often blamed?
 - ▶ You can also explore if the client has any important and positive role models by asking whether the client has anyone to talk to when in trouble.



Coding Sheet - Executive Functions

Please select the appropriate rank with regard to the information you gathered. You can use the descriptions below the values to guide you in the selection. Please note that these only represent generic examples and not an exhaustive list.

You are required to contextualize the questions based on your client's cultural context, language, gender, age, religious and educational background. Note that any information coded in this sheet does not lead to the automatic conclusion of the client being radicalized, involved into extremism and violent extremism and/or prone to recidivate.

Low Need

The client seems to have basic understanding of how to organize complex activities and tasks, despite uncertain situations or contexts. He/she is not obsessed with negative experiences. The individual seems to learn from personal challenges. The individual makes some mistakes due to impulsive behavior or emotional decision-making.

Medium Need

The client can get things done when the necessity level is high enough. He/she regularly does things at the very last minute and does seem to not cope well with ambiguity. The client has some functional coping strategies but he/she also seems to have some dysfunctional coping strategies, like getting angry with others when stressed, or being prone to perceptions/feelings of victimhood. The client adopts confusing and contradictory behaviors.

High Need

The client is prone to anger outbursts, and makes multiple mistakes due to impulsiveness. The client is intolerant to ambiguity, uncertain contexts or situations. The client is preaching to others about what is absolutely right and wrong, and refuses to engage in any dialogue without escalating to anger or other dysfunctional behaviors. The client gets angry if he/she does not like the questions. The client becomes angry, frustrated, and irritated when talking about groups that are perceived as adversarial, without necessarily advocating for violent means. The client frequently lies, and seems to experience emotional struggles. The client gives up easily, and not even urgency can make them do the important things. Past failures are often blamed on others. The client has no tolerance for diverse opinions/beliefs. The client has no functional coping strategies, or he/she has many dysfunctional coping strategies.

Protective Factors

- ▶ The client can organize thoughts and be focused if interested in or committed to something
- ▶ The client has identified and regularly uses functional coping strategies to relieve stress and anger (exercising regularly, talking to friends, and devoting time to hobbies, meditation or self-reflection)
- ▶ The client shows good capacity to develop complex plans, despite uncertain situations and is realistic on how to achieve them

▶ Other: _____

Fig 10: Coding Sheet- Executive Functions



DOMAIN 4: Family and Friends (Primary Group)

In this Domain, you should first and foremost try to map relationships with family members and friends in the client's primary group. For instance, you may want to use the Social Network Map previously illustrated in **Fig 2** and available in Annex 3 of this manual, to direct your action. When developing the map, particular attention should be given to the client's perception of his/her position in these groups¹⁰⁰. Does he/she feel valued or trusted in these groups? What is the type of relationship with his/her closest family members and/or friends? Is there a particular point of reference or role model? This is important when and if you are going to prepare for an intervention. In fact, interventions have a bigger chance of success if you can work through credible and supportive family members or friends.

In those cases where it is particularly difficult to interact with the client, going through a point of contact within the family or group of close friends could facilitate your interaction. When engaging with family and friends, you should prepare yourself and ensure you carefully present yourself as a "resource" to them, without falling into the trap of "overpromising". It is absolutely crucial to identify family dynamics and social dynamics, as well as whether there are any pro-social models in the primary group. It is equally important to identify whether there are negative influences and anti-social models. As previously stated, individuals tend to adopt the behavior and values from the people closest to them. However, as might be expected, definitively identifying who or what is clearly pro- or anti-social can be difficult as it is not always obvious, nor mutually exclusive.

It is also useful to gain an insight into the nature of the client's relationship with his/her parents. Again the Social Network Map can help the client visualize and explain in a non-verbal manner the information. When it comes to youth and children, parenting style - as well as support or a lack of support from the people closest to the child - can either foster **resilience** or give rise to dysfunctional coping strategies. When it

comes to extremism or violent extremism, there is also evidence that recruitment into these groups is often facilitated by individuals from the primary group. In many cases, someone from the client's primary group may know about the client's involvement in extremism and/or violent extremism, but often does not openly disclose the information.

Finally, in this Domain, it may be particularly useful to assess whether the client can easily make friends online or whether his/her primary groups of reference are mostly offline. This is important information that should be also coded under the *Domain Individual Skills and Competencies (Social Skills)*. Existing research showcased that a large portion of young individuals¹⁰¹ - tend to make online connections. Notably, individuals tend to connect with "friends of friends".¹⁰² For all these reasons, **online spaces** should be explored to identify whether the client relies on online social networks to make or maintain friendships. In the aftermath of Covid-19, the use of online social media sharply increased at all levels of life, and it would be reasonable to assume that this also produced an impact in the clients' life. Therefore, online spaces should be treated as offline spaces, and all the available information about networks and friends should be integrated in the Social Network Map and your analysis.

Key Principles for Building Trust and Data Collection- a Reminder:

As the other Domains, you should always use relevant techniques and principles from the section: *Trust building and Data Collection: Key Principles and Practical Recommendations*. Notably, you should collect information on all influential relationships within the client's primary group. You should also identify if there are any individuals exercising **negative influences**. If you have already focused your efforts on prior Domains, based on the collected information so far, you should have already identified positive and/or negative experiences that are associated with being part of a family or group. On this basis, you might be able to have an idea about the client's position within his/her family and/or groups of close friends. You should also have an idea of the type of family (e.g. functional and stable family, disaggregated or displaced family).

Family and Friends (Primary Group) - Areas you should investigate:

If you managed to identify any pro-social role models or anti-social influences in the client's social groups, and if you identify negative experiences or positive experiences, you may already have an initial idea about the client's status in these groups. Additional areas of investigation can help you complete the picture:

- ▶ How would the client describe his/her family and friends?
- ▶ Does the client share problems with his/her family or group friends? If not, why not?
- ▶ How would the family or friends describe the client?
- ▶ Who are the people the client gets along the most? Whom are the people the client approaches for advice? On which topics?
- ▶ Is the client a respected member of his/her primary groups (e.g. family, groups of close friends)?
- ▶ Is the family supportive of pro-social narratives/values/behaviors or can it be considered a negative influence on the client in general?

- ▶ Does the primary group members have any means or are they in an economically/socially disadvantaged situation?
- ▶ Does the client have a low status within the family or in his/her group of close friends? Are there dysfunctional dynamics within the client's group of close friends?
- ▶ Also, with respect to the client's family dynamics and in the case of minors, you might want to explore the parenting style by asking how the rules in the family are enforced – is it by punishment, shaming or guidance? To what extent have these enforcement methods been used?

Similarly to other Domains, these information can be very personal and it is unlikely you will be able to ask direct questions to the client, at least not at the beginning. This is because the information is quite personal and sensitive, making it unlikely that you will gain such information in your first engagements with the client.

Follow-up

As mentioned, if legally appropriate and/or after obtaining the client's consent, you may want to approach a supportive family member, friend, co-worker, teacher or supervisor to get some of the information. Engaging families and community members would also clarify whether these groups can realistically support any interventions at a later stage, what his/her needs and concerns are and/or whether there are obstacles or barriers (e.g. the family does not welcome the client/ community members are rejecting the client). It should be also noted, however, that engaging the family is not always possible, especially in those cases in which the family is unwilling to cooperate. In addition, it may not be possible for privacy and security reasons, especially if the client is a minor or is incarcerated. On the other hand, if the engagement is possible, the family may be an invaluable ally in your assessment and engagement with the client. However, if you plan to interview family members, teachers or friends, there are additional considerations that you may need to take into account:

1. Families associated with vulnerable individuals or individuals connected to anti-social behaviors, may often distrust public authorities. These families may

have been already visited by police officers, security officers or social services. Their experiences with these agencies may not have been pleasant or productive, and you need to be aware, if this is the case. The key objective is here to present yourself as a resource for them and not to treat them as a mere source of information. You should have clear and genuine interest in helping their loved one (i.e. the client), while setting clear boundaries and limitations on the type of information you may share with them. Reassuring family members or friends about confidentiality- unless there is information of legal importance- as well as transparency on your role is critical. Importantly, you should first research their cultural background and adapt yourself in terms of style, language and vocabulary, similarly to what you would do when directly engaging with the client.

Sometimes, it may be appropriate for another practitioner of opposite gender, to conduct these engagements, if there is information that may make you presume that the family could be more comfortable with another gender. You should also ensure that the location of this meeting is a place they feel comfortable about. Sometimes, it may be advisable to reach them where they live or it may be prudent to choose another location. Let the family members choose. Be patient, as it is likely that you would need multiple engagements with the family before reaching mutual trust and confidence.

2. Depending on the social and cultural context, these families may be alienated by their own community or stigmatized. Some family members may also showcase a fear in providing information about their loved one, because of the lack of clarity of consequences for them and their loved ones. You should prepare yourself with a set of available responses to the questions they may ask you and present the available legal and practical resources they may access to. You should also ensure that they are aware they should only provide information they feel most comfortable with, without pressuring them in giving *all* the information they have.
3. While providing resources to them, you should also avoid to overpromise, as in later stages this may give the impression you are unreliable. Be clear on what you can help them with and direct them to other professionals that may be able to help them in other areas.

4. Some families may not be willing to engage with you or be extremely challenging to deal with. In these cases, you should try to assess whether there is a relevant “point of contact” who could introduce you to the whole family. This may be a member of the extended family or even a close friend. Do not come with any assumptions on the client’s family unit structure: in some cultural contexts, the family unit goes beyond the mere biological links, and can include individuals who are not related by blood such as, neighbors, mentors, and close friends. You may want to use the Social Network Map to investigate what the client considers as his/her family, in this regard.

It is also important to identify any potential risk in the immediate environment. Is the closest family known to be involved in anti-social behavior, or are there relatives or friends who are? Are there family members who have a criminal past? Does the client have anti-social friends or friends involved in criminality? In exploring these topics, you should first consult the **Ethical Framework** of your organization and ensure you legally abide by the available data protection protocols for these cases. Some of the information may not be legally accessible for privacy reasons. However, there could be opportunities to receive this information from other agencies, if there are protocols in place that ensure data protection and confidentiality; or you may simply ask these questions to the client and see whether he/she is willing to respond. The collected information may be also noted in the Domain *Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context*.

Exploring this Domain can also give you information relating to:

- ▶ History/Biography;
- ▶ Individual Skills and Competencies (Executive Functions, Social Skills);
- ▶ Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context.



Coding Sheet - Family and Friends (Primary Group)

Please select the appropriate rank with regard to the information you gathered. You can use the descriptions below the values to guide you in the selection. Please note that these only represent generic examples and not an exhaustive list.

You are required to contextualize the questions based on your client's cultural context, language, gender, age, religious and educational background. Note that any information coded in this sheet does not lead to the automatic conclusion of the client being radicalized, involved into extremism and violent extremism and/or prone to recidivate.

Low Need

The client has some supportive and pro-social members from primary group (online and/or offline) and these people may have the means and/or the willingness to help the individual. The client mainly follows or is influenced by values and behaviors of pro-social members of his/her primary group.

Medium Need

The client has some support from pro-social family members and/or close friends, but also has some important dysfunctional dynamics with some of them. The client is attracted to some anti-social activities. There is no immediate concern about the client from his/her primary group. The client might have shown signs of sudden behavioral change and has started to gravitate towards friends and groups that nobody else knows about. The family has suddenly and unexplained decreasing contact with the client.

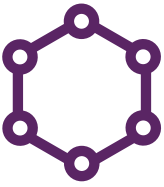
High Need

The client does not have a pro-social primary group and/or is isolated. He/she has low status in his/her primary group. The client isolates himself/herself from pro-social family members and close friends, with no explanation. The client is getting into fights with family members and close friends about their way of living. It is hard to find any pro-social role models in the client's groups of reference. The client's family or close friends are either anti-social individuals (e.g. exposed to crime, extremism, violent extremism) or uninvolved with the individual's life. The client does not have any contact with pro-social family members or close friends.

Protective Factors

- ▶ The client receives active support from pro-social primary group members
- ▶ The client has a high status and important role within his/her pro-social primary group
- ▶ The client is attached to pro-social family members or close friends
- ▶ Other: _____

Fig 11: Coding Sheet- Family and Friends (Primary Group)



DOMAIN 5: Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context

Beyond primary groups, there are other influences, factors, and dynamics. This Domain explores the economic and socio-cultural contexts in the country, region or community. Some of the factors may be indirect drivers for both **pro-social** and **anti-social** behavior. Although their impact may be relatively difficult to trace, these influences should be considered and captured in the Social Network Map. These influences are crucial to understand the client's self-awareness and his/her position and perception within the society.

For this Domain, since secondary and tertiary groups mostly refer to social context, peer influence, and aspirational groups, most of the information is gathered from other sources. The analysis of the client's secondary and tertiary groups and the socio-economic context may include factors such as a high rate of unemployment, corrupt governance, discrimination against groups in society, lack of general opportunity, as well as positive factors such as a comprehensive health care system, a functioning education system, and presence of community resilience mechanisms. Therefore, this Domain does not only focus on negative factors within the community of reference, but also on existing community resilience mechanisms.

In this Domain, you should investigate what additional groups are operating within the client's groups of reference, including secondary groups (e.g. community) and tertiary groups (e.g. aspirational groups). The idea is that the client's **sense of identity and belonging** and his/her behavior may be impacted by these influences. The concept of identity is complex. It usually relies on the client's self-identification with specific social "in-groups", as opposed to "out-groups" and can change overtime, based on the client's development and life

experiences. Research indicated that extremist and violent extremist groups have become increasingly sophisticated in addressing the individual's need to determine his/her identity and sense of belonging, by fueling the "in-group/ out-group dynamics"¹⁰³ and exacerbating the process of **social categorization** which entails a categorization of people into social groups based on different characteristics like skin color, religion, nationality, age. In other words, extremist and violent extremist groups demonstrated they can be successful in adopting compelling and appealing solutions on how to define the "self" in relation to society and often offer galvanizing narratives (e.g. the "hero narrative") to fuel the individuals' sense of significance within society. This "competing identity and sense of meaning"¹⁰⁴ offered by the extremist groups is typically reinforced by specific **social markers** which can be defined as attributes and symbols that signal group belonging, ranging from clothing, accessories to vocabulary. This trend has been also confirmed within the **Significance Quest Theory**, which, postulates that seeking personal significance (significance quest) is a need that lies at the heart of an individual's choice to engage in violent extremism. It goes without saying that it is important to identify all the influences that the client is subject to, without neglecting the tertiary groups, which serve as aspirational role model (both pro-social and/or anti-social) in the client's eyes.

Notably, tertiary groups comprise influences that are present in the client's vicinity, but also groups not in the client's vicinity or online groups that serve as a sort of "virtual community" for the individual. By asking about influences in the tertiary group, you can find out whether the client is supportive of anti-social ideas that are popular in his/her social context or if he/she has been exposed to them.

Key Principles for Building Trust and Data Collection- A Reminder:

It may be difficult to capture information about the client's secondary and tertiary groups of reference without directly interviewing the individual. Ideally, you could conduct an independent analysis of the social and economic context around the client through interactions with family members, friends, teachers, co-workers who are willing to meet with you. If you collected information under the Domain *Family and Friends (Primary Group)*, you should already have much of the information available. However, you should also consider accessing existing research on macro-level factors such as information on demographics, structural problems in the community, the economic circumstances of the community, existing entertainment and educational opportunities and facilities, youth forums, and pro-social clubs. You may also want to follow Hedayah's approach¹⁰⁵ in categorizing macro-level factors, by separating out three main categories:

- ▶ **Macro-level push factors:** the structural conditions that might make an environment more conducive to anti-social movements and/or extremism and/or violent extremism (e.g. social marginalization of certain groups, lack of opportunities, high rate of unemployment, widespread corruption).
- ▶ **Macro-level pull factors:** the existence of palatable extremist and/or violent extremist narratives or ideals that resonate or appeal to segments of the population or specific communities. Pull factors represent the "ideological" element that may influence community attitudes.
- ▶ **Community Resilience Mechanisms:** Factors, mechanisms and positive values at the community level that may foster community resilience and strengthen positive community attitudes.

Finally, you can also make use of the Social Network Map as illustrated **Fig 2** of this manual and available in Annex 3. This map should be built in consultation with the client who should be encouraged to share his/her perception of his/her position in society. You may also want to find out whether the client is engaged in any pro-social groups, as well as what kind of opportunities are offered within those groups and what the client thinks of those opportunities.

Social Groups (secondary and tertiary groups) and Social & Economic Context - Areas you should investigate:

These are some of the areas of investigation you may want to ask in order to explore the client's secondary and tertiary groups and the role these groups play in his/her life.

- ▶ If prejudice against specific social groups has been voiced earlier, you may want to ask the client to elaborate on that. Is the client connected to groups that spread these opinions? If so, which ones? Or is he/she part of a social group that is targeted by these prejudices?
- ▶ How does the client perceive himself/herself?
- ▶ Does the client feel attached to or integrated within his/her social/family/community context?
- ▶ If you researched the different **social markers** of tertiary groups in the individual's groups of reference, you can ask about them. This could be music, clothing, role models, social media influencers, and other well-known social markers that signify group belonging. If any of these markers are present, you could ask the client about them. Otherwise, you could just mention a social marker that is widely popular in his/her community or age-group, and then ask the client what he/she thinks about that marker.
- ▶ If the client has previously mentioned online communities or specific social media influencers he/she "follows" you may want to ask him/her to elaborate on this.
- ▶ If you are aware of different tertiary groups that may have an influence, you could ask what the client thinks about them.

Exploring this Domain can also give you information belonging to:

- ▶ History/Biography;
- ▶ Family and Friends (Primary Group);
- ▶ Individual Skills and Competencies (Executive Functions, Social Skills, Educational/Vocational Skills)



Coding Sheet - Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context

Please select the appropriate rank with regard to the information you gathered. You can use the descriptions below the values to guide you in the selection. Please note that these only represent generic examples and not an exhaustive list.

You are required to contextualize the questions based on your client's cultural context, language, gender, age, religious and educational background. Note that any information coded in this sheet does not lead to the automatic conclusion of the client being radicalized, involved into extremism and violent extremism and/or prone to recidivate.

Low Need

There are few influencers of anti-social groups within the client's social context (online and offline), and none or few in his/her groups of reference. There is no known influence of the influencers on the client. The client possesses a understanding of "himself/herself", in relation to his/her social and personal context. There is a limited number of push and pull factors or drivers of anti-social behaviors (e.g. neighborhood affected by criminality), and the client is either not affected by or shows that he/she has some coping strategies to deal with the situation.

Medium Need

There are anti-social groups in the community which may have an influence on the client, but he/she does not have any known contact with them or any of the people on the fringe of such groups. The client is engaged in limited pro-social activities or groups, or has voiced interest for a pro-social group or activity. There are limited opportunities for the client to get a job. The client lives in a marginalized context and had negative experiences with the police/ security forces and other representatives of the state. There are limited community resilience mechanisms and job opportunities. There are known push and pull factors, drivers of anti-social behaviors and several socio-economic problems in the community and the client seems to be affected by some of these problems and has issues in consistently reacting to them in a functional manner.

High Need

There are known recruiters or anti-social groups in the client's social context and there is evidence that he/she has a connection with them. The client is not active in any pro-social group or activity and does not have a strong sense of belonging to any specific pro-social groups of reference. The client lives in and is heavily influenced by an environment with high unemployment, corruption, marginalization or frequent anti-social phenomena. General sentiments towards the authorities are negative. There are no credible community resilience mechanisms or job opportunities. There are known push and pull factors, drivers of anti-social behaviors, and severe socio-economic problems in the community; the client is known to be affected by these factors and developed grievances.

Protective Factors

- ▶ The client is clearly engaged in a pro-social group of reference or is actively interested in group (pro-social) values
- ▶ The client displays functional coping strategies against precarious and disadvantaged environments and/ or has a strong sense of belonging to his/her pro-social groups, pro-social context and community
- ▶ There are community resilience mechanisms and/or job opportunities and the client makes/ has made use of them
- ▶ The client rejects any influence from any known anti-social groups
- ▶ The client promotes pro-social and/or positive values and behaviors in his/her social groups
- ▶ Other: _____



STEP 3

Needs and Strengths Assessment Process

After collecting as much information as possible through interviews with the client, research, direct observation and interviews and engagement with third parties, it is now time (**Step 3** of the process) to conduct the holistic *Needs and Strengths Assessment*, and identify the client's critical needs, if any.

At this stage, you should have all the available information related to primary, secondary and tertiary groups in your Social Network Map and the Reflexive Lifeline tool. You should also have coded the information in the appropriate Coding Sheet, by ranking each Domain into *low, medium and high*. Protective factors should also be categorized in each specific Domain.

As a reminder, the identification of the client's needs does not automatically identify individuals who are radicalizing or prone to recidivism into violent extremism. If there are legitimate information that lead to this hypothesis, it is required you consult risk assessment professionals who can then help to clarify the issue.

The *Needs and Strengths Assessment* process can be defined as the holistic analysis of all the Domains, which contains the client's needs (*low, medium and high*) as well as potential protective factors. The aim is to identify the Domain(s) considered to be **critical needs**, which will be the focus of the intervention. As a reminder, the identification of a Domain as a **"critical**

In Step 3, you are ready to conduct the *Needs and Strengths Assessment*:

- a. Match the Domains ranked as *high needs* from the coding sheets, with all the available protective factors across the Five Domains
- b. Repeat the matching process with *medium needs*.
- c. Identify the Domains that are critical needs: these are the Domains previously marked as a "high need" and for which there are no compensating protective factors available.

Critical needs have the highest potential for shaping the client's life and you need to address them in your intervention (Step 4).

need" should be done through a holist "matching process", in which each Domain (previously marked as *low, medium or high* need) is compared with all the identified protective factors. A Domain can represent a critical need (i.e. requiring an intervention) if it has been previously marked as "high" and/or "medium" in the coding sheet and if, after this holistic "matching process", it has been noted that there are no protective factors able to compensate for it, across all Domains. Domains marked as critical *needs have the highest potential to shape the individual's life* and should be prioritized for your intervention.

In order to support this process, you can utilize the *Needs and Strengths Assessment Sheet* in **Fig 13**, which should be completed based on all the information you gathered in the specific Coding Sheets per each Domain. You should use your own professional judgement in identifying Domains representing the client's critical needs after the assessment of all the captured protective factors. In this context, it is important that you obtain the client's buy-in, as any intervention would need to have active input from the client.

As mentioned in previous sections, in the presence of several Domains marked as critical needs, you may want to prioritize the intervention for those for which there are more realistic chances of success and that have the potential to support the more difficult Domains marked as critical needs.



If possible, you should discuss the results with your colleagues and gain validation from other social services that have been handling the client. If available, you can complement these results with clinical assessments performed by psychologists or other professionals experienced in clinical tools and diagnosis.

General guidelines for conducting the final *Needs and Strengths Assessment* include:

- a. Start with looking at the Domains you previously categorized as *high needs* because it is most likely amongst the *high needs* you will find the **critical need(s)**. Match these identified needs with captured protective factors. You may want to capture this matching process in a separate document first. If there are positive circumstances (i.e. protective factors) in the client's life that may mitigate these existing *high needs* this would need to be taken into account, before labeling a specific Domain as a critical need. For instance, if a young boy comes from a community with active anti-social recruiters on the ground, this can mark the Domain *Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context*, as a *high or medium need*, depending on the specific situation. However, the young boy may have strong attachment to supportive and pro-social family members (to be coded under *Family and Friends (Primary Group)*). The existence of this pro-social bond may have the potential to alleviate for the anti-social context in which the young boy lives. Therefore, the next thing to do after identifying a *high need* in the coding sheet, is to look for protective factors that could potentially compensate for it. These factors should be searched across all the Domains, and not only necessarily in the specific Domain of reference. Protective factors are also important aspects that you could utilize when designing an intervention, so it is crucial that you identify them.
- b. You should repeat the same process with the *medium needs* (if any). Domains marked as *medium needs* are important as they can - under certain circumstances - develop into both *high needs* and even **critical needs**. Match any protective factor with the *medium needs* as well.
- c. After matching the Domains ranked as *high* and *medium needs* with existing protective factors, you should now determine the Domains representing critical needs: In practical terms, a Domain deemed to be a critical need has been previously marked as a high need in the coding sheet and is not compensated by any of the existing protective factors captured across all the Domains. As this process is inherently subjective and not actuarial, you should use your professional judgement and the client's insights, as there is not an objective criteria to determine critical needs. You may also want to consult other colleagues and specialists to limit subjectivity.

As previously mentioned, Domains categorized as *low needs* are less of a concern for the practitioners and interventions should not be prioritized to address them.

IDENTIFY THE CRITICAL NEEDS

The evaluation is based on the cultural and social context where you are located, so you should always consider the client's background, social norms, expectation, gender etc. You must adopt a holistic approach and assess all the needs together in order to identify any Domains potentially marked as **critical need(s)**. When doing this, there are some important principles that should be taken into account:



Keep a Focus

The focus for the whole assessment is to identify the Domains that constitute critical needs and develop ideas for interventions that help the client adopt more pro-social and functional pathways, in accordance with his/her capacities, and desires. To achieve this, together with the client, you need to identify the Domains marked as *high needs* that have the biggest potential to shape his/her behavior towards anti-social life, are not compensated by any credible protective factors, and that therefore should be addressed to support the client in achieving a pro-social life. Those are the critical need(s). Importantly, the analysis should be completed before considering potential interventions.



Prioritize Critical Needs based on Possible Interventions

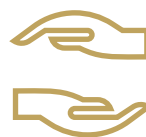
If you judged several Domains as *potential critical need(s)*, you may need to decide which one should be prioritized. In some cases, the identified Domains marked as *potential critical need(s)* are connected, and you can help the client work on them simultaneously. In those cases, there might not be any necessity to prioritize amongst the different Domains. However, it should be noted that in other cases, it might be that several Domains are marked as high needs, for which there are no protective factors— such as lacking education, lacking functional coping strategies, lacking social skills, and insufficient support from

family and friends. Practically, all these Domains may be considered potentially as critical needs. How to prioritize and develop an intervention? In these cases, you should look at the available resources that can be mobilized for the intervention, and prioritize the Domains/ *critical needs*, based on the feasibility of intervening on those. It is detrimental to choose to intervene on a specific Domain, when you already know you do not have the ability or capacity to intervene, therefore professional judgement is also necessary when selecting your options. Remember that focusing on all of the *potential critical needs* at the same time could be counterproductive, especially when it comes to helping the client develop skills that he/she might be lacking.



Be Aware of acute situations

You may also want to ascertain whether there are any self-evident acute situations that need immediate attention. Some needs are related to for instance the client's (sense of) personal safety and security, access to food, water or housing. These areas would automatically constitute a critical need, you should immediately focus on, as it is crucial for the client to feel safe. Additionally, acute situations may also comprise a situation in which the client is already clearly subject to the influence of a violent extremist group and/or is already showing intention to act upon this.



Be also aware of the Importance of Protective Factors and Low Needs

Protective factors and *low needs* serve two important functions for practitioners. These are elements that could potentially alleviate or compensate for a *high or medium need*, and can also be mobilized by practitioners to develop an intervention. Therefore, after identifying the Domain(s) that represent the most pressing critical need(s), you should re-identify all the protective factors and *low needs* to assess whether there are any elements that could contribute to


determine a direction for the potential intervention. This may include friends and family members that could be positively mobilized, as well as skills that are important to reinforce and could be of service in the intervention.

For example, if you identified a personal interest that could possibly lead the client towards pro-social work in the community, but then you also identified the Domain of *Individual Skills and Competencies* as a *high need* – e.g. lacking education needed for specific community work, learning difficulties and lack of interest in getting the necessary education – you could then ascertain whether there are any pro-social voices, for example, in the client’s primary group, who could be of assistance in motivating the individual to pursue the needed education.


Another example would be if the client has no purpose in life and cannot devise any personal plans for the future at all (a *high need* in the Domain of *Personal Goals and/or Interests*); in this situation, if you also identified several simultaneous protective factors – e.g. pro-social family members who are very supportive (which means there is *low need* in the domain *Family and Friends (Primary Group)*) – these can be utilized in motivating the client to start pursuing pro-social goals in life.

NEED COMBINATIONS


Some Domains may have a stronger importance than others, depending on the specific context and their relevance in the client’s life. There are some combinations that may put the client in a critical situation, and hence need extra attention. These *high needs* will not necessarily be deemed as critical needs (unless there are no protective factors able to compensate for them). In case of doubts, it is suggested you consult with your colleagues and other professionals, in order to best use your professional judgement and mitigate subjectivity. In the following paragraphs, you will find relevant Domain-combinations that you may encounter, as well as considerations for specific Domains.

 **Individual Skills and Competencies;**

 **History/Biography;**

 **Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context**

You should be aware that there are some specific Domains that could impact the others. If the Domain *Individual Skills and Competencies (Executive Functions)* is marked as a *high need*, as the client does not have functional coping strategies and resilience, you may want to consider the *medium needs* for other Domains as *high needs*. For example, if the Domains a) *Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context* and b) *History/Biography* (e.g. grievances due to marginalization) have been labeled as *medium needs*, while simultaneously the client lacks functional coping strategies (i.e. under the Domain: *Individual Skills and Competencies (Executive Functions)*), the Domains that were originally marked as *medium needs* should also be flagged as *high needs*. The reason for this is that even minor setbacks in life have the potential to push someone with low resilience or lacking functional coping strategies towards dysfunctional behavior. How you plan an intervention and choose the critical need(s) may very much depend on the relevance of the Domain(s).

 **Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context;**

 **Family and Friends (Primary Group)**

When working on clients potentially or actually involved in extremism and/or violent extremism, a crucial piece of information is the possible client’s connection with influential extremist recruiters, in the client’s social groups (to be marked under the Domain: *Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context*). This is also the case if you realize that there are extremist and/or violent extremist role models within the client’s close groups of reference (to be recorded or under the Domain: *Family and Friends (Primary Group)*). The information is crucial for assessing the urgency of the intervention, due to recruiters’ tendency to exploit personal vulnerabilities. If you identify recruiters who have a personal connection with and **influence over the client**, this would raise the Domain a) *Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context* and/or the Domain: b) *Family and Friends (Primary Group)*, to a critical

need level. Given the potential for this to become an *acute situation* or even an imminent threat to the individual's well-being, the information would need to be prioritized, regardless of the client's existing protective factors elsewhere. It should be noted that the physical presence of recruiters is not something you can easily "eliminate" directly through the intervention, unless you manage to physically separate the client from his/her dysfunctional context. However, you could at the very least target the credibility of their narratives and messaging. In addition, in these circumstances, you should pay particular attention to the *high or medium needs* in other Domains that could be potentially exploited by violent extremist or anti-social groups in their recruitment strategies. In most of these circumstances - especially if the client is already in contact with these recruiters or is strongly interested in their narratives - it becomes a matter of *who reaches the client first* (you or the recruiter) and meets his/her expectations.

History/Biography:



When assessing the Domain: *History/Biography*, you may have found that your client (may) have been a former extremist or violent extremist. This information may also have been already shared with you by other agencies/organizations, as typically these individuals are known and are released from correctional facilities or in the case

the intervention is in support of the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals convicted and imprisoned for terrorist crimes. When engaging with such clients, you may need to be aware of any (previous) ideological mindset that may persist, even subconsciously. Former violent extremists or individuals convicted and imprisoned for terrorist crimes are also a difficult population to reintegrate due to, for instance, public stigmatization, lack of acceptance, and the potential for rejection from their families. All these circumstances should be taken into consideration when looking for potential critical need(s) and planning an intervention.

Family and Friends (Primary Group):



You may encounter cases where your client completely lacks an active social network. Being isolated and having few or no friends is usually a critical need by itself, especially for youth. Young clients who lack a social network may present several needs, and require support and intervention, even if they seem to possess good coping strategies, show signs of resilience, have educational/vocational skills, and pro-social family members.¹⁰⁶ Again, how you plan an intervention (Step 4) in this case is very much dependent on the other Domains and protective factors.



VALUES FROM THE CODING SHEETS

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

CRITICAL NEEDS

L (Low), M (Medium), H (High)	L	M	H		
Personal Goals and/or Interests					
History/Biography					
Individual Skills and Competencies:					
Education/Vocational Skills					
Social Skills					
Executive Functions					
Family and Friends (Primary Group)					
Social Groups (secondary and tertiary) and Social & Economic context					

Fig 13.: The Needs and Strengths Assessment Sheet.



STEP 4

Planning for an Intervention

In Step 4, you are ready to develop an intervention for the client. This should address the critical need(s) identified in Step 3 (*Needs and Strengths Assessment*).

After conducting the *Needs and Strengths Assessment*, you should have prioritized the client's **critical needs** and have a good understanding of the existing protective factors you can mobilize in a potential intervention. If the selected critical needs are currently fulfilled through dysfunctional behaviors or attitudes, you should also consider

alternative ways of meeting those needs, including through the mobilization of existing protective factors. In practical terms, when developing the intervention, you should also think of a specific plan with roles and responsibilities for yourself and other practitioners. Some of the guiding questions you may want to ask yourself are included in **Figure 14** below.

PLANNING FOR AN INTERVENTION- ACTION PLAN

Roles and Responsibilities:

- ▶ Who is responsible for the overall supervision/coordination of the engagement and intervention, setting measurable objectives, identify internal or external resources, and consolidate information on the progress/ lack of progress?
- ▶ Should the information about the intervention be reported to other competent or relevant organizations/agencies? Why or why not? If yes, which ones? Who is responsible for sharing the information? What is the frequency for sharing information? What type of information should be shared and reported?
- ▶ What type of information do you also need from other competent or relevant organizations/agencies? Who should be responsible to request and collect the information?
- ▶ Who is responsible for first engaging the client? How many practitioners should be involved? On which rationale?
- ▶ How should the information from the *Needs and Strengths Assessment* be shared? Who is responsible for that? Whom the information should be shared with?
- ▶ Who is responsible for implementing the intervention? How many practitioners should be involved? On which rationale? Are there already mechanisms in place to share relevant information about the progress during the intervention? Who is responsible for that? Whom the information should be shared with?

- ▶ Who are the relevant parties involved in each task/phase of the Intervention?
- ▶ What are the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, with respect to one other?
- ▶ Is there a specific timeline for the intervention?
- ▶ Does the timeline affect the definition of Roles and Responsibilities amongst the Stakeholders?

Focus/Objective/Direction

- ▶ What is the overarching goal for the intervention? What are the specific objective of each phase/ task of the intervention?
- ▶ How is the objective mapped to the client's critical needs and protective factors?
- ▶ How is the task mapped to the previous and/or subsequent task(s)?
- ▶ What are the strategies to re-adapt the objective and re-frame the Intervention, if needed?
- ▶ Is the client involved and consulted on setting the "Direction"? How to strengthen his/her buy-in?
- ▶ Is the intervention in line with available ethical frameworks or national/local protocols in place?

Applied Methodologies

- ▶ How is the tasks going to be completed?
- ▶ What methodology are you applying (e.g. mobilization of specific protective factors exc.)?
- ▶ What are the strategies to readapt the methodology if needed?
- ▶ Is the client involved and consulted on the methodologies? How to strengthen his/her buy-in?

Expected Outcome(s)

- ▶ Under what circumstances is each task and the whole Intervention considered completed?
- ▶ What target you are expecting to achieve? Does this match the initial objective(s)?
- ▶ What strategies are in place to readapt your target(s), if needed?

Timelines and Resources

- ▶ In what order are the phases of the intervention going to be completed?
- ▶ What is the aspirational timeline to complete the tasks? Does this match with the original Timeline for the overall intervention?
- ▶ What strategies are in place to re-adapt your timelines, if needed?
- ▶ What available resources do you have in place to implement the Intervention? Do you need to identify additional Resources?
- ▶ Do you have existing partner's resources you can mobilize, in case of need? What do you need to do, to ensure you can rely on external resources?

Location(s)

- ▶ Where are and the locations where the whole Intervention is to be completed?

Fig 14: Guiding Questions for an Intervention Work-Plan

The aforementioned questions should guide you in developing a work-plan which defines roles and responsibilities between yourself and your colleagues. Sometimes, a focal point or case manager may be responsible for coordinating the overall intervention, while specific practitioners are in charge of the specific implementation and the monitoring of progress. The Roles & Responsibilities section should also guide your action towards external organizations and agencies. Depending on the specific case and national regulations, you may be required to collaborate with other entities and share information about the overall engagement and intervention. In these cases, you should also think of which specific information you are required to share and how. At the same time, you may also need additional information from other partners or agencies, and in this case, you should plan on identifying which specific information you need and from whom. In terms of timelines for the intervention, you should be also aware that timelines are always aspirational and should be revisited multiple times as needed, especially if progress with the client cannot be easily reached. If you are not able to progress in your intervention with the client, you

should re-consider whether the client is sufficiently motivated or whether some parts of the intervention may need to be revisited due to potential obstacles or previous misunderstandings. While patience is a key principle, you should also consider whether you are the best option as a practitioner for this specific client, if you realize that progress cannot be achieved. Finally, an important consideration is related to **resources**. In environments with competing priorities and limited resources, it is good practice to identify the available resources and capacity you have to carry out the full intervention. In your consideration, you should also reflect whether existing partner institutions can be involved in an effort to **burden-share the costs of the intervention**. These can include community based organizations that offer specific programs or available professionals, in the case of, for instance, vocational training courses. Ideally, you should leverage all the existing partnerships and resources in the community, which can help you mobilize the client's protective factors and encourage him/her to adopt a pro-social life-style.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR AN INTERVENTION

The intervention should be based on the previously conducted *Needs and Strengths Assessment* and in coordination with your client. You should be aware that, because the needs and protective factors may change over time, it may be necessary to adapt or change your intervention. Through the intervention, you might also gather additional information that may push you to re-evaluate the elements and design of your plan. The following includes some of the considerations you should keep in mind:

- ▶ **Objectives-led Intervention.** The intervention should be objectives-led. Based on the identification of the client's critical needs and protective factors, you would need to determine the objectives and an overarching direction that encourages the client towards a pro-social life. This is why goals, interests, and educational/vocational skills are important elements to consider. At this stage, you also need to assess what realistic opportunities are available and whether there is a reasonable chance of success.
- ▶ **Realistic Timelines.** Interventions may require different timelines depending on the client's circumstances. While you should set aspirational timelines for each phase of the intervention, you should also adapt them depending on circumstances. If progress is not visible after some time, you should consider changing some elements of the interventions. In some cases, you should also evaluate whether you are the best practitioner to carry out the intervention.
- ▶ **Client-led intervention:** In order to reinforce the client's sense of agency, the key decisions during the intervention should be made by the client himself/herself. While you can support the individual in his/her decision-making process, you cannot make the choices for him/her, as this may not correspond to genuine success. In other words, it is important to enable the client's *intrinsic motivation* and encourage him/her to partake in the intervention as part of his/her internal desire to change. Ideally, the designed intervention should follow this principle and attempt to mobilize the client's protective factors, community resources, and resilience mechanisms

(e.g. vocation trainings, art workshops, community or social work, school education, volunteering work in the community) where possible. It is worth noting that the client may not necessarily commit to the intervention immediately, even though you reached a certain level of trust with him/her. This is often the case for convicted terrorists hosted in correction facilities, where there is often the implied or real perception that they are required to attend rehabilitation programs, irrespective of their *intrinsic motivation* to commit to those. While it may be counter-productive to oblige a client to attend or participate in the intervention, if this is completely left to the client's decision, the client may eventually decide not to participate. These are complex cases that require an investment on reinforcing these clients' buy-in at each stage of the engagement. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to provide **practical immediate incentives** to convince them to receive the intervention, at least in its first phases. Additionally, in these cases, it is arguably difficult to establish a certain degree of trust to begin with; therefore, if one specific practitioner managed to earn trust during the interviewing/ *Needs and Strengths Assessment* process (Step 1 -3), it may be reasonable to involve the same person in the intervention (Step 4) as well, as oftentimes this can reassure the client and prevent any setbacks.

TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

In terms of types of intervention, it is important to note that these should be personalized as much as possible, as the client would arguably have unique needs. However, it is also worth noting that in contexts with limited resources, it is not always possible to implement a significant number of interventions for each client, as this may stretch budgets and add burdens on limited capacity, timelines and resources¹⁰⁷. One of the available approaches is to then prepare the ground for a limited number of potential interventions, based on an understanding that these are usually the programs and interventions that are the most effective in a given community or the most typical for a specific target population. This "menu of options" can then be mobilized as part of an overall designed intervention, based on the client's unique situation.

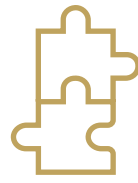
Some of the most frequent considerations to take into account, when building the "menu of options" for an intervention are the following:



Interventions Relating to Social Needs

It is crucial to emphasize that there could be different reasons for labelling any of the social Domains as a **critical need**. One case, as mentioned earlier, is if the Domain *Family and Friends (Primary Group)* and has been marked as a critical need, because the client completely lacks an active social network, and the situation is unable to be compensated by any protective factors. That would be a strong critical need on which to focus the intervention. In this specific case, it is vital to help the client build a pro-social network. This could be combined with helping the client pursue some pro-social goals or activities. However, you should carefully balance your approach: If an individual faces challenges in establishing pro-social networks, an intervention that simultaneously targets his/her social skills and professional skills-building might be too much to cope with. You should always use your professional judgement.

Another example where this Domain would constitute a critical need is if the client is primarily surrounded by anti-social friends and family members, including some linked to extremist and/or violent extremist groups. However, in the case of teenagers, when you design the intervention, you should be aware that adolescents are very dependent on their peers. As individuals are also generally attached to their family members, that emotional connection could make it very difficult for you to navigate. In such sensitive situations, you should be cautious and avoid directly targeting or delegitimizing the client's group of friends or family. This may in fact potentially damage the client's relationships. In these cases, an intervention might have better chances of success if you focus on the client's personal goals and individual skills to reach his/her goal. This approach could help mitigate any potential negative influences from the anti-social group of friends, while at the same time help the client develop a new pro-social network and pro-social goals, based on the available opportunities in his/her community. In case of dysfunctional families, you may also want to identify pro-social gatekeepers in the client's extended family unit and engage them in the intervention, in an effort to positively influence the client.



Interventions Relating to Status and Meaning in Life

If the client has not been recruited into any anti-social groups, it is easier for you to develop an effective intervention that could satisfy their need for status and meaning in life. However, if the client has been part of an anti-social group, your intervention will likely require more focus and effort. As being part of a movement with a strong purpose is often a very powerful experience, leaving the group can create a big psychological void in the individual. This needs to be adequately understood and addressed. In such cases, it is very important to work on the client's *intrinsic motivation* that could shape future goal and work as a pro-social substitute. This is particularly true when the client joined an anti-social group to fulfill a need for answers to his/her life questions, as well as for ideological reasons.



Psychological and/or Medical Interventions

If you detect any psychological or medical issues, these would be of prime concern. If you suspect any serious psychological disorders, you should consult a mental health professional before going any further with the assessment or intervention. These issues would first need to be addressed separately by appropriate professionals. If the person experienced violence and traumatic events in the past, they will likely need counseling or trauma therapy. People who have been exposed to violence for prolonged periods of time often suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). If untreated or undetected, this condition could severely hinder a person's integration into society and also be expressed through anti-social behavior in the future.¹⁰⁸ In addition, you may want to acquire basic knowledge about general mental illnesses and disorders such as depression, dissociative syndromes, psychosis, and schizophrenia. These should be addressed as separate problems by appropriate medical personnel. Any such mental health issues need to be addressed separately by medical professionals and are beyond the scope of this manual.



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SPECIFIC TARGET POPULATION

In parallel to considering a “menu of options” for the most frequent interventions, you should also reflect on the most common types of clients, you may eventually engage with. For the following types of clients, you may need to ensure you come across as **a credible messenger** meaning that you would need to possess a certain level of trustworthiness and authenticity within the client’s community or groups of references:

- ▶ **Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters (RFTFs):** This group has most likely used violence against others. This situation may make the clients’ reintegration into society more difficult (this refers to cases where individuals are known to have used violence against others or committed violent crimes. This is especially the case if victims or families of the victims are members of the community that the client would likely be rejoining. In these cases, part of your intervention should also be devoted to understanding community concerns and the conditions under which society would likely accept the client back¹⁰⁹. These efforts may help to create the conditions for community acceptance and social reconciliation. In some cases, the client will need to be reintegrated in a different community from his/her original one. In such cases, you should evaluate which groups of reference would be more likely to support their

reintegration process. An in-depth analysis of this target population, may also reveal that:

- ▶ They perceived themselves as part of the “outgroup” or “not integrated within their community”, since the beginning;
- ▶ They had little or no bonding outside their family.

These two factors are of critical importance for your intervention, as in most cases for many of these clients rather than “re-integration”, you would need to focus on “integration” to begin with.

- ▶ **Other returnees from conflict zones:** Similar to RFTFs, this group includes individuals who may have not necessarily committed any violent acts in conflict zones, such as coerced individuals or children. However, their exposure to violence and, in some cases, their complacency within the system, might make their rehabilitation and reintegration more difficult. In certain cultural contexts, women can be particularly stigmatized and seen as outsiders, even if there is evidence of kidnapping and coercion. Similarly, children are sometimes seen as potential threats and not as victims. In such cases, you should focus on social acceptance and determining the best interest of the child. This may also include their relocation and reintegration elsewhere.

- ▶ **Hard-to-reach individuals:** As mentioned earlier, the presence of an active social network is crucial in anyone's life. Hard-to-reach individuals might be defined as "social outcasts" and are often isolated from the community with few, if any, supporting family members and friends. They may lack academic skills and may have been incarcerated because of petty crimes. In order to support their full reintegration into society, you should help them find a worthwhile pro-social goal that they would like to pursue, support them in developing the necessary skills they lack, such as social, educational and coping skills, while at the same time remaining aware that the reintegration process is lengthy and relapses are common.
- ▶ **Pro Social.** An example from the USA and Africa which uses ideas from the Nobel Prize winner in economics, Ellinor Ostrom; the program aims to make groups work together instead of fighting each other. It has been used in Sierra Leone in several projects. <https://www.prosocial.world/>
- ▶ **Social Welfare, Academics and Training for Pakistan (SWAaT).** For the successful reintegration, monitoring and support for youth previously involved in violent extremist activities/ organizations. This entails a very comprehensive approach for conducting Follow-Up Visits (FUVs).¹¹⁰

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY PROGRAMS

When planning for an intervention, it is crucial to assess the existing community resources and programs you may have access to. As mentioned, based on the client's existing critical needs and protective factors, it is possible to leverage the programs that the community has to offer to reinforce the client's adoption of a pro-social and fulfilling life-style. In addition, partnering with community organizations can also be functional in those cases in which resources and capacity are limited. As a practitioner, you should also adopt a proactive attitude and scout potential opportunities that may not be immediately visible: can you create opportunities in the area? Are there existing civil society organizations that can help vulnerable clients to strengthen their social, educational and coping skills? If there are no existing opportunities, communities and practitioners should work together to create them. You can find a list of examples from all around the world, from which you can take inspiration. It goes without saying that these examples are not necessarily CVE-specific and can be used to tackle a wide range of social problems:

- ▶ **STREAT.** Self-sufficient program from Australia that helps people out of economic disadvantage and homelessness. <https://www.streat.com.au>
- ▶ **Tostan.** A great example from six African countries focused on empowering communities to bring sustainable development and positive social transformation. <https://www.tostan.org>



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CONCLUSION

This manual provided comprehensive guidance for assessing a client's needs and protective factors, based on **Four Steps**, in order to better plan for a client-focused intervention. As a practical resource, the manual encouraged the reader to use a systematic approach that starts by exploring **Five Domains**. While the creation of separate Domains is partially artificial, as these often overlap with one another, this system provides an organized approach for collecting and consolidating information, thus facilitating reflection and review during the final *Needs and Strengths Assessment* process, in consultation with the client.

The manual does not seek to trace conclusions to the actual likelihood of radicalization or recidivism into violent extremism. In fact, for these types of assessment more robust and comprehensive risk-oriented tools are appropriate. However, in a context where not all practitioners have the ability to manage these complex instruments, it is necessary to offer templates and guidance on how to handle clients. Based on the premise that extremist and violent extremist groups proved themselves as capable of meeting the client's needs through their narratives, this manual offers itself as a guidance to ensure that practitioners can holistically capture their clients' needs and help them be functional members

of society. This approach would then diminish the likelihood that the client is receptive to anti-social and simplified narratives offered by anti-social groups, including violent or extremist groups.

The aforementioned methodology is inspired by a relevant group of sociological and criminological theories and research and based on the insights that human behaviors are the product of personal needs and the social context surrounding the individual, including primary, secondary and tertiary groups. Notably, while human needs tend to be similar, the strategies that individuals adopt to "meet" their own needs can be very diverse and may be either functional or dysfunctional. In this context, extremist and/or violent extremist groups worldwide have already demonstrated their ability to identify the individuals' specific needs, including "seeking personal identity and belonging", "seeking financial stability", "seeking meaningful friendship" and "seeking adventure", by providing simplistic, dysfunctional solutions, galvanizing narratives and/or anti-social values, as responses. Therefore, fulfilling an individual's critical needs often depends on whether the society is capable of offering adequate solutions, models and alternatives, as opposed to those offered by anti-social groups, including extremist and violent extremist groups.

One of the main sections of the manual also covered the importance of building-trust, in compliance with ethical principles and appropriate information-gathering techniques. In fact, the limited success of many interventions and programs often is caused by or related to the inadequate investment in building a rapport with the client and on the lack of authenticity, credibility and transparency during interviews and personal engagements.

The emphasis on **protective factors** is another pillar of this manual, as the CVE international community often tends to look for the “negative aspects and risks”, without necessarily capturing the opportunities, positive values and resources around the client. As such, this manual offers different guidelines as opposed to traditional approaches, which tend to explicitly focus on the risk that the individual poses to others and the society. In this context, “risk” has been explicitly defined as a “need that is not or has not been met by society” and that has the potential to be identified and met by the solutions offered by extremist and violent extremist recruiters. The idea is that if an individual is capable to adopt functional and pro-social strategies to meet his/her critical needs, the appeal of violent extremist narratives and solutions can be diminished, thus decreasing the risk for radicalization and/or recidivism. As such, the manual adopts a **“just enough, just in time, just for you”** approach, which moves away from hypothesizing about the future and the general discourse of “predictive values” leading to violent extremism or recidivism in violent extremism. Instead, the manual focuses on the available evidence and needs, at the present moment.

While focusing on the client’s needs and protective factors, the manual does not disregard the importance of a macro-level analysis. In fact, ample sections are dedicated to the importance of the overall social and economic context, the influence of primary, secondary and tertiary groups as well as the proximity of extremist and/or violent extremist groups within the client’s personal sphere. As such, the manual encourages the wide use of tools such as the Social Network Map, based on the Social Network Theory, to capture the influence of the primary, secondary and tertiary groups as well as the macro-level social and economic context.

In conclusion, this manual adopted a practical and non-clinical approach in offering guidance and templates gathering information and conducting a holistic analysis of the client’s needs and protective factors. It does not represent the ultimate solution for assessing and engaging clients, but it offers practical guidance for non-clinical practitioners. This is meant to represent a starting point for further contextualization and validation, based on the application in the local context, culture and region of reference.

THE MANUAL IN PRACTICE ENDNOTES

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ANNEX 1:

Assessment tools

Non-exhaustive list

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BERS Epstein, Michael H., and Jennifer M. Sharma. Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale: A Strength-Based Approach to Assessment. Austin, Texas: Pro-Ed, 1998.

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Andrews, Donald A., James Bonta, and Stephen J. Wormith. The Level of Service/ Case Management Inventory (*LS/CMI*). Toronto, Ontario: *Multi-Health Systems*, 2004.

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VERA 2R (Violent Extremist Risk Assessment 2 Revised)	Pressman, D. Elaine., and Jhon Flockton. Calibrating risk for violent political extremists and terrorists: The VERA 2 structured assessment, <i>the British Journal of Forensic Practice</i> , 14, 237-251, 2012.
VRAG	Quinsey, Vernon L. Violent Offenders: Appraising and Managing Risk. <i>2nd ed.</i> Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2006.
WAIS-IV	Wechsler, David. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale. 4th ed. San Antonio, Texas: Psychological Corporation, 2008.
WISC-V	Wechsler, David. Wechsler. Intelligence Scales for Children. 5th ed. San Antonio, Texas: Psychological Corporation, 2014.



ANNEX 2:

Noemi Bouhana's S5 model and Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Approach to Human Development and Socialization

Two key unrelated approaches are important to the needs-based framework taken in this manual, and also the overall ecological model underpinning this work: Noemi Bouhana's S5 model¹¹¹ and Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach¹¹² to human development and socialization.

Bronfenbrenner's bio-psycho-social approach to child development emphasized how the *extra-familial environment* impacted and interacted with the child and the family. In particular, Bronfenbrenner acknowledged the role of the economy, government, and culture in his developmental scheme, the premise being that macro structural realities trickle-down to have a strong influence on the day-to-day realities and long-term developmental process of children and their immediate environment. While Bronfenbrenner's model refers to child development, it has utility in how we think about the impact of distant systems on an individual's needs. It assists in ensuring that how we think about the *influencers* of human behaviour incorporates both the obvious and hidden social structures in society.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Child Development

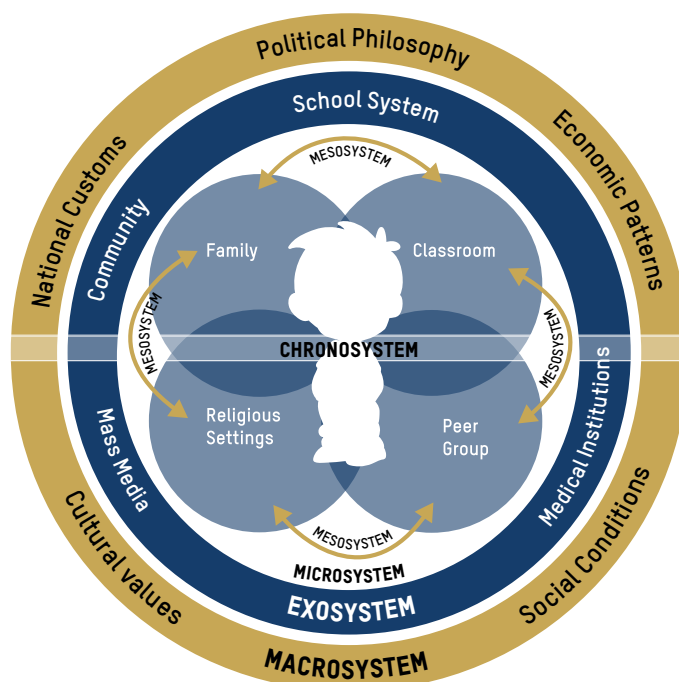


Fig 16: "03: Forming Positive Relationship," Making Access Happen, Johns Hopkins University, last modified June 12, 2021, <http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/mah-m03-wrapup>

Noemi Bouhana's model of five categories of inference include¹¹³:

Susceptibility – This refers to the notion that some individuals are more susceptible to environmental influence than others – this has been documented in several domains.

Selection – To be vulnerable to something, one needs to be at risk of coming into contact with it. In other words, one needs *to be at risk of exposure*.

Systems – Social norms and how they are shared and transmitted is important as it sets out the moral context for each society. Furthermore, the role of government (both local and national) is important, especially in relation to how policy decisions impact social integration (or segregation), issues of discrimination, the role of economic policy in social disharmony, and inequality.

Settings – Extremism-enabling settings (online or offline) can make individuals more open to the adoption of new moral beliefs. For example, this may include the opportunity to discuss with like-minded peers how extremist ideas and violent extremism can be justified. Crucial to this process are the relationships with significant others who already hold extremism-enabling beliefs.

Social Ecology – Locations that enable extremism are not randomly distributed in both the online and the offline world. For example, we know that online, certain websites, blogs, and social media channels are more likely to feature extremist content. In the *real* world, certain streets and towns at certain times are more likely to foster violent extremism.

The utility of this S5 approach is its focus on the interaction of the individual and society, but also its focus on how broader unseen societal forces are relevant to understand an individual's propensity for extremism and extremist action



Fig 17: S5 Inference Framework (Bouhana, The Moral Ecology of Extremism: A Systemic Perspective)

ANNEX 3:

The Social Network Support Map

KEY FACTORS TO DEVELOP SOCIAL NETWORK/SUPPORT MAP

- ▶ network size: total number of people identified in the network;
- ▶ domain size: total number of people in each of given groups;
- ▶ perceived availability of emotional, concrete, and informational support: proportion of network rated as “almost always” available to provide the needed types of support;
- ▶ criticalness: proportion of network perceived to be “almost always” critical of the individual;
- ▶ closeness: proportion of network perceived to be “very close”;
- ▶ reciprocity: proportion of network relationships in which “help goes both ways”;
- ▶ directionality: proportion of network relationships in which help goes primarily from client to network and proportion of network relationships in which help goes primarily from network to client;
- ▶ stability: length of relationship;
- ▶ frequency: frequency of contact

Fig. 1: Key Factors to devise a Social Network Map. Source: Tracy and Whittaker, 1990.

Network of Maria S. (21 y.o.) 13.8.2020

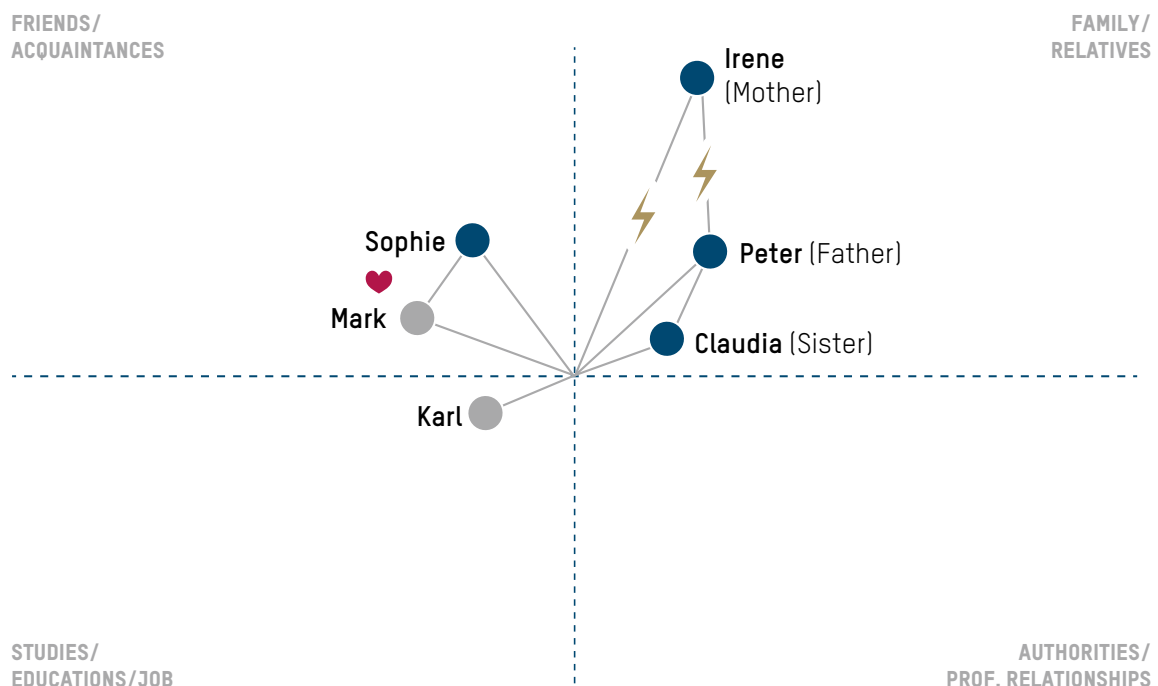


Fig. 2: The Social Network Map. Source: Maximilian Ruf and Dennis Walkenhorst, p. 10, RAN, 2021,

ANNEX 4:

The "Peace" Method of Interviewing

In 1990 the British Government and the Chiefs of Police asked a number of highly experienced police investigators to form a working group to develop up to date training on interviewing skills. In light of their deliberations they recommended what they called the 'PEACE' model/approach. The working groups began in 1992 and it involved guidance documents and training courses. Also in 1990 a senior London police officer convened a different small working party of detectives and psychologists that produced in 1991 an (unpublished) overview of aspects of psychology that might be useful to the improving of such interviewing. This overview was made available to the national team of detectives that was developing 'PEACE'.

In their guidance documents they stated a number of fundamental principles that included

- i. **Accuracy:** the role is to obtain accurate and reliable information from suspects, witnesses or victims in order to discover the truth about matters under investigation,
- ii. **Open-mindedness:** interviewers should be open-minded regarding information and any prior role of the interviewee,
- iii. **Validation:** information obtained from the person interviewed should always be tested against what the interviewing officer already knows,
- iv. **Individual-centric:** vulnerable people, whether victims, witnesses or suspects, must be treated with particular consideration at all times.

'PEACE' stands for

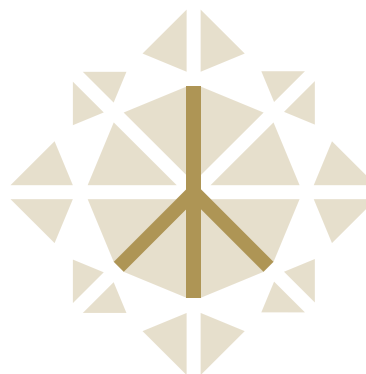
P Planning and Preparation

E Engage and Explain

A Account

C Closure

E Evaluation



First phase - Planning and Preparation

- ▶ understanding the purpose of the interview;
- ▶ knowledge of relevant law and regulations;
- ▶ defining aims and objectives;
- ▶ information about the interviewee;
- ▶ analyzing and preparing the already available evidence/information.

Second Phase - Engage and Explain

- ▶ engaging and introducing self, talk about self and establish rapport;
- ▶ explaining the reasons for interview, legal requirements, and 'ground rules'.

Third Phase - Account

- ▶ obtaining some/any information from interviewee (hence importance of rapport and preparation);
- ▶ allowing for his/her narrative to take place; when the client's story has finished, first only ask questions relating to that;
- ▶ asking other (appropriate) questions;
- ▶ introducing information known to interviewer that the interviewee has not yet mentioned;

Fourth phase - Closure

- ▶ correctly summarizing what the interviewee has said (inviting the interviewee to mention here any misunderstandings);
- ▶ asking the interviewee if he/she has any questions;
- ▶ explaining what may happen next;
- ▶ ensuring that the interviewee leaves the interview in as positive a frame of mind as possible;
- ▶ considering public confidence in your organization.

Fifth Phase - Evaluation

- ▶ evaluating the information obtained during the interview (including information contrary to what was expected);
- ▶ evaluating the interviewer's performance during the interview by self-evaluation, peer/colleague/supervisor.

Source: Bull, Ray "Roar or PEACE: Is it a Tall Story?" In Routledge International Handbook of Legal and Investigative Psychology, edited by Ray Bull and Iris Blandon-Gitli. London: Routledge, 2019.

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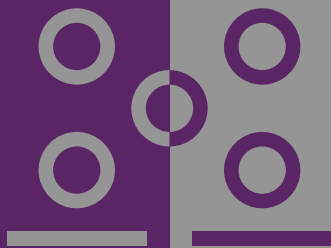
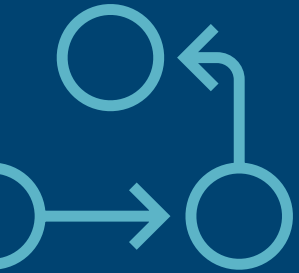
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Hedayah

Countering Extremism
& Violent Extremism

