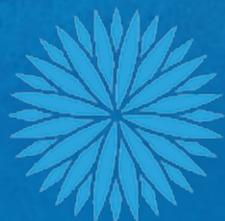




Developing a Community-led Approach to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

AN INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL



THE WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION
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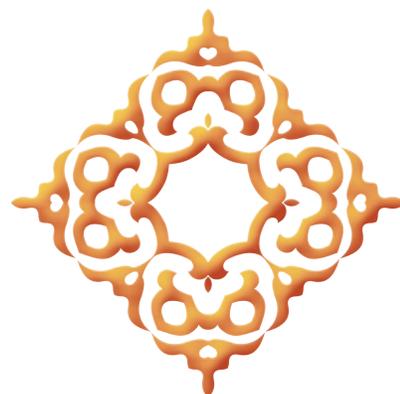
We are especially grateful for the opportunity to partner with the University of Massachusetts Lowell, and the University of Nevada, Reno on this project and the valuable collaborative input of our colleagues, Dr. John Horgan, Dr. William Evans, and Dr. Michael Williams. The empirical research they conducted helped inform the recommendations and best practices highlighted throughout this resource.

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* By the time of this publication, the MCM has been renamed for more general applicability to the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) model.

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Introduction & User's Guide

In 2014, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) launched a two-year study of community-based Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programming led by the World Organization for Resource Development and Education (WORDE) and its effectiveness in promoting positive social integration and encouraging public safety.

The formative evaluation, conducted by the University of Massachusetts-Lowell and the University of Nevada, Reno, assessed community-based participation in CVE programs, community awareness of risk factors of radicalization to violent extremism, and the community's natural inclinations in response to these factors. The evaluation utilized surveys and focus group discussions with a wide array of respondents, including Montgomery County Police Officers, gang/violence prevention special-

ists, local representatives of faith-based organizations, participants of WORDE programming and other community members who had not been previously involved with WORDE's model. The findings of that evaluation are presented in a separate report, "Evaluation of a Multi-Faceted U.S. Community – Based, Muslim-Led CVE Program." As a result of this rigorous evaluation by some of the most premier academics in the field of counter terrorism, at risk youth development and scientific evaluations, WORDE's programming is the first evidence-based, CVE relevant program in the U.S.

Illustrating lessons learned and best practices from two years of programming and evaluation, this curriculum was designed to supplement the evaluation and guide communities, including law enforcement and local government agencies, with:

- Building positive and collaborative relationships with diverse Muslim communities
- Understanding the potential risk factors of radicalization and mobilization to violent extremism
- Creating a community-led engagement model to counter violent extremism

About the Publisher

WORDE is a nonprofit, educational organization whose mission is to enhance communication and understanding between diverse communities to mitigate social and political conflict. For over a decade, WORDE has provided groundbreaking research and programming in the field Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) both in the U.S. and abroad.

Our public policy research, programming, and training helps local communities understand the important distinctions between the mainstream Muslim community and extremists who manipulate the tenants of Islam for their own destructive purposes. In 2010, WORDE authored the first community-centered paper to guide policymaking on preventing homegrown violent extremism. In 2011, WORDE developed the International Cultural Center (ICC) to engage Montgomery County residents in programs that promote social cohesion based on mutual respect and harmonious coexistence.

Format

The content in this manual is presented as teaching notes, which can also be read out loud. Facilitator notes are italicized, and other action items (e.g. presenting students handouts, or playing content on the accompanying PowerPoint) are highlighted.

The curriculum is divided into three, interactive modules that can be taught separately as 'stand-alone' units of instruction. If taught consecutively, the curriculum is designed to be a multi-day training, with each module requiring several hours of instruction depending on time dedicated to all the activities and discussion questions. Approximate lengths of each lesson are included in the beginning of each module.

Module One provides an introduction to mainstream Islamic cultures, beliefs and practices as an important

foundation for building collaborative relationships with Muslims. This module highlights the diversity of Muslims communities in America and provides tips on how to build trust and engage Muslims around issues of public safety.

Module Two explores potential risk factors of radicalization and how they might contribute to a person's vulnerability and susceptibility to violent extremism.

Module Three provides an overview of the "Montgomery County Model" (MCM)— the first community-led model in countering violent extremism in the country that is now evidence based as a result of the evaluation conducted during this project. It should be noted that by the time of this publication, the MCM has been renamed for more general applicability to the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) model. This chapter includes best practices from WORDE's experiences piloting the program in Montgomery County, MD and provides recommendations for how communities can incorporate aspects of the model in their respective jurisdictions.

Content Overview

This curriculum is designed to be an interactive resource that allows local jurisdictions to apply what they have learned directly to their communities. To this end, **this guide utilizes an interactive, multi-media format accompanied by PowerPoint presentations that can be used to facilitate training sessions.**   Learning is meant to be collaborative and WORDE recommends utilizing partner and small group activities whenever possible.

Each module contains the following:

- A Module Structure to provide an indication of how long each section should take, at minimum. Each section can be expanded or condensed based on how much time is provided to address discussion questions and group activity.
- Achievement-based Objectives that describe how par-

ticipants will be able to apply each module's content.

- Food for Thought Media and Questions feature a thought-provoking short video, audio clip or statistic. These introductory sections are meant to captivate participants and set the tone for the discussion and activities to follow.
- Discussion Questions so that participants can reflect on what they are learning and understand how they might apply it to daily practice. These are meant to stimulate interactive discussions either in large or small groups.
- Engagement Tips provide insight and recommendations on complex or sensitive topics, such as suggestions for how law enforcement might engage with Muslim women or how to facilitate a dynamic town hall dialogue.
- Spotlights that provide more in-depth knowledge or interesting information on topics that are not commonly understood, such as Latino conversion to Islam within Muslim communities in the U.S. or how the internet is used to radicalize individuals.

The end of each module includes:

- Summary of Key Lesson Learned that allow participants to quickly recap what they've learned.
- Group Activities and Role Playing Exercises that allow participants to interact with the content in meaningful ways. Each module's activities can be adapted for students to work in small teams, with partners or alone.
- Handouts that provide a summary of key terminology and quick tips that distill important guidance from each module.
- Sources and Additional Reading Lists that provide resources for participants to pursue further study or research.

It is important to note that this curriculum is intended to be flexible. The facilitator can use the activities, videos and discussion prompts provided, or they can draw from relevant and current issues affecting the communities and jurisdictions in which they serve.

MODULE ONE

Engaging Muslim Communities

Total Lesson Length: ~ 5 hours minimum

***Facilitator's Note: Module 1 is the longest in this manual, because it establishes a framework for understanding the core components of developing relationships of trust with Muslim communities. The module is divided into three parts, which can be taught over the course of multiple class sessions. For example, Part A can be taught in one session, and Part B and C can be combined in a second session.*



PHOTO: BOSTON GLOBE

Module Structure

Part A: Understanding Muslim Communities—An Introduction to Islamic Cultures, Beliefs and Practices

1.0	Food for thought (trivia questions)	15 minutes
1.1	Introduction to Islam and Muslim Americans	20 minutes
1.2	Who are Muslims? (Diversity within Islam; 5 Pillars of Islam; 6 Pillars of Faith)	45 minutes
1.3	Islam's Origins	10 minutes
1.4	Islamic Institutions (Mosques, Madrassas, Shrines, and Charities)	30 minutes
1.5	Holidays and Observances	15 minutes

Part B: In-depth Issues

1.6	Contemporary Issues Affecting Engagement with Muslim American Communities	60 minutes
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Part C: Effective Engagements Strategies

1.7	Impediments to Building Trust	10 minutes
1.8	Building Trust by Engaging Local Leadership and Beyond	10 minutes
1.9	Locations and Format for Engagement with Muslim Communities: Innovative Town Hall Forums	10 minutes
1.10	Building Sustainable Relationships with the Muslim Community: Engagement in Mosques	10 minutes
1.11	Group Activities: Action Plan and Training Presentation	30-60 minutes

Module Introduction: Understanding Muslim cultures, beliefs and practices is critical for building trust and creating positive and collaborative interactions with Muslim communities.

Target Audience: Law enforcement officers, public officials (e.g. county executives, US attorney generals, school board members, etc.), community service providers, counselors, educators, and interfaith partners.

Module Learning Objectives: Upon completing Module 1, participants will be empowered to:

- Articulate the foundational beliefs and practices of Islam
- Differentiate between cultural and religious practices
- Identify key historical events in Islamic history

- Compare key institutions in Muslim communities and the characteristics associated with each
- Describe significant holidays and observances within Islam
- Comprehend cultural and religious diversity within Muslim communities in America
- Analyze and avoid stereotypes that hinder engagement with Muslim communities
- Explore why building trust is critical for positive engagement and safety within communities
- Describe guidelines for engagement with Muslim communities, inclusive of sensitivities and best practices

Facilitators' Note—At the beginning of the lesson, establish a baseline with participants to understand what prior experiences they have had with engaging Muslim communities:



Discussion Question

Before we begin, how many of you have had experiences engaging with Muslim communities before?



Understanding Muslim Communities– An Introduction to Islamic Cultures, Beliefs and Practices

❖ I.O Food for Thought!:

Using an interactive, multi-media format, we will begin each lesson with at least one audio-visual or statistic (“food for thought”) to stimulate discussion.

1. Which of the following prominent figures are Muslim Americans?

- Rep. Andre Carson
- Dave Chappelle
- Dr. Oz
- All of the above

**Correct answer is D.*

PPT 1 There are number of prominent Muslim Americans active in American society – on TV, in the movies, and in politics, law enforcement, and other public service roles. For example, there are over 7,000 declared Muslims in the military.

2. ___% of Muslim Americans, are U.S. citizens:

- 20%
- 70%
- 45%
- None of the above

**Correct answer is B*

PPT 2 63% of Muslim Americans are first-generation immigrants to the U.S – and many have

since naturalized to become US Citizens. Muslims have come to the US as early as the colonial era as slaves. Approximately 30 percent of Africans forced into slavery in the United States were Muslim. Today the largest ethnic groups are African Americans 35%, White 28%, Asian 18%, other 18% and Hispanic 1%.

3. True or False: Approximately 50% of Muslim Americans regularly watch one hour of TV or more a night, use social networking sites and watch pro and college sports. (**True*)

PPT 3 As you can see, Muslim American’s activities are similar to the general public’s.

4. True or False: 50% of Muslim Americans attend worship services once a week. (**True*)

PPT 4 Like Christian Americans, many Muslim Americans believe they are highly religious. According to research conducted by Pew, 69% say that religion is very important in their lives, compared with 70% of Christians.

5. True or False: Muslim American women are one of the most highly educated female religious groups in the United States. (**True*)

PPT 5 Muslim American women are not only one of the most highly educated female religious groups, but they also report incomes more equal to men, compared with women and men of other faiths.

1. “Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism,” *Pew Research Center*, August 30, 2011, <http://www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/muslim-americans-no-signs-of-growth-in-alienation-or-support-for-extremism/>.



Discussion Questions

- What surprised you about the statistics? Why?
- How do stereotypes influence how you understand and interact with Muslim Americans?
- Can someone share an experience you've had working with Muslims in your community?



present day Saudi Arabia when the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad ibn (son of) Abdullah.² At that time, Muhammad would often meditate in a cave in the mountain of Hira where he would reflect on the state of religious, social and economic affairs in his society. Islamic historians note that Muhammad, who was orphaned at a young age, was deeply concerned with the plight of vulnerable individuals, principally the elderly, women and those economically disadvantaged in the Arabian society in which he grew. Muslims believe that the angel Gabriel revealed the first verses of the Qur'an in the cave on the mountain of Hira

in 610 A.D. and slowly revealed the Qur'an in its entirety over the next 22 years. Prophet Muhammad then taught its message to his community until his death in 632 C.E.

Muslims believe that their holy book, the Qur'an, is the word of God and provides timeless guidance on a wide range of issues from personal piety and morality, to social justice and social welfare. As an Abrahamic faith, it includes references to other prophets such as Moses and Jesus, and venerated religious figures, such as Mary, mother of Jesus.

The Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad in Arabic and is read and recited in Arabic by communities across the world. It has been translated into almost every major language and has facilitated a strong tradition of literacy and education in Muslim communities throughout history.

❖ 1.1 Introduction to Islam and Muslim Americans

What is Islam and who are Muslim Americans? In order to effectively engage in community outreach with one of the fastest growing religious communities in America, it is important to understand the diverse cultural practices and religious beliefs of Muslims living in America. This section will give a brief overview of Islam and diverse characteristics of Muslims in America.

The word Islam comes from the Arabic root "salaam" or peace. Translated from Arabic, it can also mean "the one who submits or surrenders", which has given rise to the expression, "Islam means peace." The term Muslim refers to practitioners of Islam and can translate as, "one who submits or surrenders to the will of God."

The religion of Islam began in the 7th century in

2. Muslims often say "peace be upon him" after mentioning the Prophet's name in Arabic or English out of respect and reverence.

Common Terminology

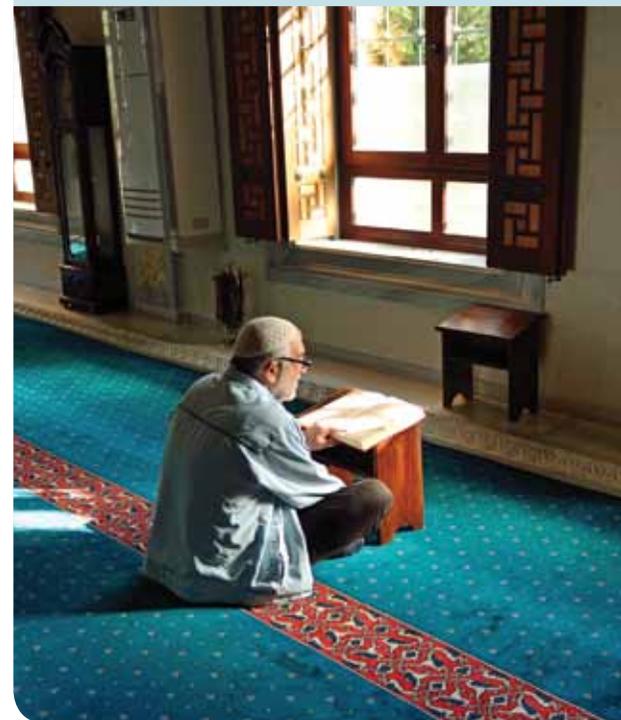
PPT 6

- **Allah:** The Arabic word for God, used by Muslims and Arabic-speaking Christians
- **Ahl al-Kitab:** A term to reference followers of Judaism and Christianity, members of the other Abrahamic faith traditions. The Qur'an refers to the "people of the book" with reverence, emphasizing respect and collaboration between the three Abrahamic faith traditions.
- **Fatwas:** Advisory opinions or religious edicts issued from traditionally trained religious scholars. Important contemporary examples include the work of Dr. Tahir ul Qadri, who issued a comprehensive fatwa that prohibits terrorism and suicide bombing³ and WORDE's 2011 release of a fatwa that prohibits domestic violence co-authored by Shaykh Hisham Kabbani.⁴
- **Hadith:** The traditions, teachings, deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)
- **Hijab:** Veil or scarf for women
- **Imam:** A prayer leader; can also refer to a leader of a mosque
- **Islam:** The religion of Muslims, derived from the Arabic root word "Salaam" or "Peace"
- **Masjid/Mosque:** House of worship
- **Muslim:** Someone who practices the faith of Islam
- **Qur'an:** Holy scripture for Muslims
- **Shariah:** A moral code and guidance on how to best practice Islam
- **Shaykh:** A spiritual guide or teacher and also used in Arabic countries to mean elder or community leader
- **Shi'a:** The second largest sect in Islam – estimates vary from 10-15 % of the Muslim population worldwide. Countries with significant Shi'a populations include: Iran, Southern Iraq, Southern Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.
- **Sufism:** The spiritual or mystical component of Islam
- **Sunnah:** Prophet Muhammad's way of life
- **Sunni:** The majority sect of Islam—estimates vary from 75-90% of the Muslim population worldwide
- **Ulema:** Plural of "Alim" or learned scholar of Islam

ENGAGEMENT TIP

The Qur'an

Muslims consider the Qur'an to be the word of God and a sacred text. Often there is etiquette around how the Qur'an is handled and read, especially within the mosque and home space. Some Muslims believe the Quran should not be handled without performing ablution (washing themselves to remove impurities from their hands, face, etc.). Think about why the Qur'an is significant for Muslims and what implications this might have when visiting a mosque or a Muslim's home. This will be addressed more fully in Part B.



3. "WORDE Supports Dr. Tahir ul Qadri's Fatwa Against Terrorism," *WORDE Public Statements*, March 4, 2010, http://www.worde.org/publications/public_statements/news-alert-11/#sthash.aafLgnVm.dpuf.

4. Shaykh M. Hisham Kabbani and Dr. Homayra Ziad, "The Prohibition of Domestic Violence in Islam," *WORDE*, 2011, http://www.worde.org/publications/worde_reports/the-prohibition-of-domestic-violence/.



Discussion Questions

- Have you heard any of these terms before? If so, in what context?
- Did any of these definitions surprise you?



ENGAGEMENT TIP

Muslim Greetings

It is customary for Muslims to greet other Muslims with the phrase, “*As-Salam-u-Alaikum*,” which means “peace be unto you.” It is not only a form of salutation, but a sign of respect. Greeting Muslims with “*As-Salam-u-Alaikum*” is not required by non-Muslims, but it is welcome and can help build trust with Muslim communities.

Some Muslims do not shake hands with members of the opposite sex. If interacting with Muslims who are not of the same gender, it is better to let them initiate a handshake if desired. Sometimes instead of reciprocating a handshake, Muslims place their hands over their heart, which is also a symbol of respect and good will.

GREETINGS:

As-Salam-u-Alaikum (pronounced “us-saa-laam-muu-alie-kum”), meaning “peace be unto you.”

RESPONSE:

Wa Alaikum Assalam (pronounced “wa-alie-kum-us-salam”), meaning “and peace be unto you.”

You may also hear the longer version of the greeting, which includes:

“*As-Salam-u-Alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh*” (pronounced “us-saa-laam-muu-alie-kum waa-rah-ma-tull-la-he wa-bara-kaa-tu-hu.” This means “peace be unto you and so may the mercy of God and his blessings.” The response is also extended, “*wa Alaikum Assalam wa Rahmatullah wa barakatuh*” (pronounced “waa-alie-kum-us-salam waa-rah-ma-tull-la-he wa bara-kaa-tu-hu”).

❖ 1.2 Who are Muslims?

With nearly 1.3 billion followers around the world, Islam is the second largest religion and considered one of the fastest growing religions in America.⁵ Muslims represent diverse cultures, ethnicities and heritages worldwide. According to a 2009 Pew Research Center survey, the majority of the world’s Muslim population are not Arabs, but South and Southeast Asian. Globally, Indonesia has the world’s largest Muslim population with approximately 202 million, followed by Pakistan with 174 million Muslims, India with 160 million and Bangladesh with 145 million.⁶ Muslims also make up a large percentage of the population across north and sub-Saharan Africa, Malaysia, the Middle East, China, Central Asia,

Europe and North America.

Muslims have been an indigenous part of American society since the colonial era, when approximately 30% of slaves who came to the U.S. were Muslim. Today, there are approximately 6-8 million Muslims in the U.S. who come from a variety of ethnicities and backgrounds—Arab, South Asian, African, African American, Caucasians and Latinos. As discussed in the warm-up

5. Michael Morris, “Pew: Islam and ‘Other Religions,’ Not Christianity, Are Fastest Growing Religious Groups in North America,” *CNS News*, April 2nd, 2015, <http://cnsnews.com/blog/michael-morris/pew-islam-and-other-religions-not-christianity-are-fastest-growing-religious>.
6. “Mapping the Global Muslim Population,” *Pew Research Center*, October 7, 2009, <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/10/07/mapping-the-global-muslim-population/>.

exercise, approximately 70% are American citizens and 63% are first generation immigrants to the U.S. Muslim Americans hold a variety of occupations and professions,

and are active members of their communities—often committed to social justice and service to their family, friends and communities.



ENGAGEMENT TIP

Support Local Refugee Communities

In recent years, there has been an influx of refugees (those fleeing their home because of racial, ethnic, political, religious or social persecution) from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somali and Syria. In FY 2014 nearly 70,000 refugees were resettled in the United States, with almost half originating from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan.⁸ Many of these refugees served the U.S. military overseas as translators and in other capacities, and because of their involvement in the conflict, are persecuted in their home countries. The U.S. government has granted many of these refugees and their families special immigrant visas (SIV) and many have settled in large urban areas across the United States. However, federal assistance for these families is limited and many families often face significant economic hardship, lack of mental health resources, difficulty finding jobs, etc. For example, “82% of the estimated 80,000 Somalis living in Minnesota are ‘near or below the poverty line.’”⁹ Social service providers often cite a lack of access and/or cultural competency to effectively engage these underserved populations. When engaging with Muslim communities, it’s important to recognize the barriers to economic resources, education and health care that these communities may face.

Law enforcement can play a key role in helping these communities integrate and thrive in their new homes. For example, several years ago, former Minnesota, US Attorney Todd Jones assisted in establishing the Young Somali-American Advisory Council to reduce terrorist recruitment of young men within the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota Somali community. The Montgomery County model and the International Cultural Center’s (ICC) Crossroads program also serves as a key platform for law enforcement to interact with and support newly arrived refugee families.¹⁰ [Both will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3.]

SPOTLIGHT

Muslim Social Justice in Action— Following the deadly shooting on June 17th at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, at least 8 churches in the south were victim to arson and fire damage. Following the string of attacks, a coalition of Muslim communities launched a fundraising campaign to rebuild the predominantly African American churches damaged in the attacks. In the first ten days, the campaign raised close to \$80,000 with support from Muslim communities across the United States. The campaign was organized during the holy month of *Ramadan*, in which Muslims fast and often give generously to charity. The campaign called for respect of all houses of worship as sanctuaries and for solidarity with African American communities.⁷



Discussion Question

- What can local jurisdictions do to support recently arrived refugees and their families?

7. Renee Lewis, “US Muslim Groups Launch Fundraiser to Help Rebuild Burned Black Churches,” *Al Jazeera America*, July 7, 2015, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/7/7/us-muslim-groups-launch-fundraiser-to-rebuild-burned-black-churches.html>; Jareen Imam, “Muslims Raise \$38,000 to Rebuild Burned Black Churches,” CNN, July 8, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/08/us/muslims-help-southern-black-churches-irpt/>.
8. “Refugees: A Fact Sheet,” *American Immigration Council*, October 1, 2014, <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/refugees-fact-sheet>.
9. Khaled A. Beydoun, “Ramadan in the Shadows: Fasting while Poor,” *Al-Jazeera*, June 21, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/06/ramadan-shadows-fasting-poor-150615095609167.html>.
10. <http://www.theicc.net/programs/crossroads>

❖ 1.2a Diversity within Muslim Communities

The Muslim American community is not only ethnically and socioeconomically diverse, but also in thought, belief and practice. Since its origins, Islam has never been practiced monolithically. As Islam spread across different continents, Muslims adapted and integrated diverse cultural practices into their religious traditions. Many extremist groups espouse homogeneity and conformity in practice, stifling original thought, banning

SPOTLIGHT

Convert Care—Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in America and conversion by Latino Americans is an increasing trend in the Muslim American community. Mosques and Muslim community organizations are expanding programming to accommodate increasing numbers of new Muslims and the complex identities converts bring with them. For example, Ta’leef Collective in California and Chicago has a flagship program called Convert Continuum of Care that provides support, resources and community connections for converts and those who want to learn more about Islam. These types of programs seek to help converts maintain positive relationships with their families, work through past trauma and build positive relationship with other Muslims who can serve as mentors. This is in direct contrast to tactics used by extremist groups who often require recruits to isolate themselves from family and friends, “to develop parallel lives in complete isolation and secrecy.”¹¹ This represents psychological factors that can lead to violent extremism, discussed more fully in Module 2.

cultural practices as “innovations” and portraying Islam as an intolerant faith. Yet, in fact, the following has remained true throughout history:

PPT 7

- There has never been one monolithic or hegemonic interpretation of the Qur’an’s meaning.
- Multiple schools of Islamic jurisprudence and legal thought have existed for over a century.
- There isn’t a single, codified text of Islamic law.
- There is no universal Islamic dress.
- Not all Muslims identify with Arab culture.
- Globally and across America, there is incredible diversity in architecture, food and language that broadly comprises “Muslim cultures”.



PHOTO: ALI KHAN ISLAMIC CENTER



Discussion Questions

- Why is acknowledging diversity and complexity of the Muslim American community important?
- Share an on-the-job experience where this might matter. For example, when visiting Muslim homes, what is appropriate for one family may not be for another. This will be addressed more fully in Part C.

11. Fathali M. Moghaddam, “The Staircase to Terrorism—A Psychological Exploration,” *American Psychologist* Vol. 60, No. 2 (February-March 2005): 161-169.

❖ 1.2b Core Beliefs (The Five Pillars of Islam)

Although Islam is expressed in a variety of ways, depending on one's cultural or ethnic background and individual interpretation, there are five core pillars, which form the foundation for practicing Islam.

- **Shahada:** The testimony of faith and the belief that there is one God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.
- **Salaat:** Prayer performed at least 5 times at specific times throughout the day. Congregational prayers performed weekly on Friday similar to Saturday for those of the Jewish faith and Sunday for Christians. Daily prayers can range from 5-10 minutes depending on speed. During certain holy nights, Muslims may pray additional supererogatory prayers, for example, *tarawih* prayers during *Ramadan*.



ENGAGEMENT TIP

Praying Outside

While praying in congregation in a mosque is encouraged, it is not mandatory. Muslims are required to pray in a quiet, clean area, with ample space to stand up, and bow-down in prostration (unless there is a physical limitation preventing them). Most practicing Muslims try not to miss a single prayer. To accommodate the needs of Muslims, some public buildings and offices offer non-denominational meditative spaces for prayer. In some circumstances, Muslims may prefer to pray outside, or in a public space if a meditation / prayer space is not available. Prayer in a public space is generally permissible as long as it is not disruptive to others, or creates a safety risk. For example, praying in front of a fire exit could pose a public-safety hazard in the event of an emergency.

- **Zakat:** Charity (giving at least 2.5% of one's savings to the less fortunate each year if one is financially able).
- **Sawm:** Fasting during the month of *Ramadan*, abstaining from food, drink and sexual relations from dawn to dusk.
- **Hajj:** Required for those in good health and who can afford to travel to the city of Mecca, in present-day Saudi Arabia.

❖ 1.2c Six Principles of Faith (Imam)

Islam has six core beliefs, or principles of faith that also infuse a Muslim worldview:

- Belief in God, or "Allah" in Arabic.
- Belief in the angels.
- Belief in the revealed books (including the Torah, the Bible and the Qur'an).
- Belief in the Day of Judgment, resurrection and the afterlife.
- Belief in the predestination by God of all things, both the (seemingly) good and the (seemingly) bad.
- Belief in prophets and messengers (including Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad).



Discussion Questions

- After reviewing the pillars and principles of Islam, how do these compare and contrast with other faith traditions you are familiar with?
- Based on what you know so far, how do Muslims regard those of other faiths?

❖ 1.3 Islam's Origins

Prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca (present day Saudi Arabia) in 570 C.E. He received the first revelation of the Qur'an in 610 C.E., which was slowly revealed in its entirety over the next 22 years. In 622 C.E., after enduring persecution in Mecca, Muhammad and his followers migrated to Medina, which marked the beginning of the Islamic calendar. In Medina, Muhammad issued the constitution of Medina, based on the injunctions established in the Qur'an for a pluralistic, just state.

Several years later, the Prophet Muhammad re-established the Muslim community in Mecca, after marching on the city, joined by tribe after tribe along the way. They returned to the city peacefully in 630 C.E. In 632 C.E., the Prophet performed his last pilgrimage and died soon thereafter. He is buried in the Prophet's mosque in Medina.

SPOTLIGHT

The Constitution of Medina—The Constitution of Medina was drawn up by the Prophet himself, and demonstrates his ethical norms, his spirit of inclusiveness and his innovative approach to a modern, complex society. He described this community as *ummah wahidah*, that is, “one community,” while in other empires of the world, religious minorities were tolerated but not given any political rights. In this document, non-Muslims were given security rights equal to all the other groups, as well as cultural rights equivalent to the Muslims. Religious freedom was guaranteed, and all groups were accorded rights to self-governance and autonomy. However, it was also required that Muslims and non-Muslims share the military burden against the enemies of the new state and share the cost of war. There was no state taxation system, so each tribal community had to provide arms, horses and camels for war preparations.



Kaaba in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the holiest and most visited place for all Muslims.

Upon his death, the Muslim community elected his father in law and close associate Abu Bakr, as Caliph or successor. This marks the main distinction between Sunnis and Shi'as, with the latter believing that the Prophet's grandson, Ali, was the rightful heir and leader of the Muslim community following the death of the Prophet. Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali respectfully, three of the Prophet's closest family members and companions, succeeded the Prophet in leadership of the Muslim community after his death. These four were known as the rightly guided caliphs.

In 661 C.E., Imam Ali is killed, bringing to an end the rule of the four caliphs and marks the beginning of the Umayyad rule. In 750 C.E., the Abbasids took over rule from the Umayyads, shifting the epicenter of the Muslim community to Baghdad.

SPOTLIGHT

The Prophet's Life— For more information on the Prophet's life and history of the Muslim community, see the suggested reading list at the end of the module, which includes additional sources such as the interactive timeline, “Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet,” PBS, http://www.pbs.org/muhammad/timeline_html.shtml

❖ 1.4 Islamic Institutions (Mosques, Madrasas, Shrines, and Charities)

In Muslim-majority countries and in the US, there are a number of Islamic institutions, which provide religious and spiritual development for communities and promote social cohesion by bringing together communities from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. This section will introduce the four main types of religious institutions and their distinct characteristics.

❖ 1.4a What is a Mosque?

The mosque is a place of worship, rest and meditation. Mosques bring people together and foster a sense of community.

PPT 8

Muslims are strongly encouraged to pray with the community. Although it is not always feasible for people to pray all of their five prayers in a mosque congregation, men are required to at least pray with the community on Fridays (*jumma*h prayer). The *imam* (prayer leader) can be a respected community member, or someone with the requisite knowledge of how to perform and lead prayer; but not all are trained in chaplaincy. The Friday services begin with a short sermon in Arabic or the local language. Sermon topics can be on anything, but generally

focus on developing some aspect of the believer's faith. Some communities use the sermon as an opportunity to address domestic or international politics.

In addition to being a house of worship, mosques are a central place where a sense of community is fostered. Social happenings are discussed (such as marriages, births and deaths in families), community events are announced, and often funds are collected to support charitable causes. During Ramadan, Muslims also gather in the mosque to start or break their fast with the community.

❖ 1.4b What is a Madrasa?

The madrasa is a religious educational facility – and in some countries where the public school system is weak – madrasas are the

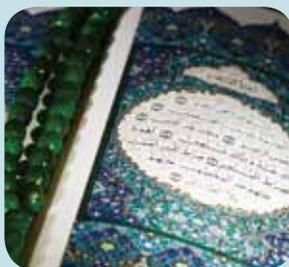
PPT 9



The madrasa is a religious educational institution. Some provide students with free education, housing and food.

ENGAGEMENT TIP

The Role of the Imam



Imams of local mosques are often respected members of the community, well-versed in religious knowledge. Historically in America, there hasn't been a

central authority for certification and many haven't had formal training in institutional management, psychology or counseling needed to provide services to growing communities. This is rapidly changing and now several institutions offer Muslim chaplaincy programs and training similar to Christian and Jewish seminaries. When engaging imams, public officials could explore the diverse needs of the community and determine whether there are any social services the local, state, or federal government could provide to address these needs.

only educational provider. Some only provide religious instruction, while others include non-religious topics such as English, mathematics and science. Some provide students free education, housing, and food. In the US there are a small number of Islamic schools that provide both religious and secular studies. More commonly, Muslim American children attend “Sunday Schools” to supplement their regular public school education with religious studies.

SPOTLIGHT

Muslim Education—Muslim education in the United States has taken on diverse forms and are embedded in a variety of institutions such as private schools, Sunday schools and even Montessori pre-school models. Many models have sought to blend traditional madrasa education with state or national approved curriculum. One example is illustrated through the Tarbiyah Project, a framework for Islamic schools created by Dawud Tauhidi. The *Tarbiyah* Project is a holistic approach to Muslim education. It seeks to cultivate a strong sense of Muslim identity and belonging while simultaneously helping Muslim children understand their role in American communities and responsibilities as global citizens.¹²

❖ 1.4c What is a Shrine?

The Shrine is an institution where Muslim saints (both Sunni and Shi’a) are revered. In places such as Morocco, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and India, shrines are central institutions where Muslims and non-Muslims come to pray and meditate. Every day, thousands of pilgrims, both Sunni and Shi’a, flock to shrines like *Mazar-e Sharif* in Afghanistan. Major shrines host

12. Dawud Tuhidi, “Towards a Renewed Vision of Islamic Education: The Tarbiyah Project,” *Tarbiyah Institute*, Spring 2001. <https://tarbiyahinstitute.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/tarbiyah-overview.pdf>.



PPT 10 *Shrines of Sufi saints are central institutions where Muslims and even non-Muslims come to pray and meditate. For example, the shrine of the great Sufi poet-saint, Rumi, draws millions of people every year. [Konya, Turkey]*

cultural events, and are spaces in which women can socialize in the public sphere. Shrines also serve as a safe space where vulnerable segments of society can seek support.

Many shrines also serve as important venues to disseminate positive messages and to counter narrow, exclusionary conceptions of Islam. The popularity and inclusivity at shrines in many parts of the Muslim world has made them a target of the violent extremists who call it “grave worship” to justify their destruction of these centuries’ old institutions. This slide highlights an attack on a shrine in Pakistan. **PPT 11**

❖ 1.4d Charities

Since giving charity is an annual obligation for Muslims, there are a number of Islamic charities and trusts (or *waqfs*) operating throughout the world. **PPT 12**

Muslim Americans donate to a wide range of charities, including faith-based organizations that provide food, clothing, shelter and humanitarian assistance to needy communities around the world. Although Muslims are encouraged to donate charity to alleviate poverty in the communities they live in, many immi-

grant families may prefer to donate to their homelands. With the advent of post 2001 federal anti-terrorism financing regulations, it is important for individuals to carefully vet the charities they are donating to.



Discussion Questions

- Reflect upon the four types of Islamic institutions. Name three distinguishing characteristics of each.
- Explain these distinctions to a colleague.

❖ 1.5 Holidays and Observances



This section explores significant holidays and celebrations celebrated by the majority of Muslims. In Islam, like other religious traditions, there are universally accepted holidays that are celebrated by all and others observed by only some denomi-

nations within Islam. The most universally celebrated holidays are *Mawlid al-Nabi*, *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid ul-Adha* (designated with * in the chart on page 18). Muslims usually take time off of work and celebrate with family, friends and with their community. Given that the Muslim calendar is based on the lunar calendar, the date for these holidays varies each year and the exact dates

SPOTLIGHT

The Muslim Giving Project—One example of a prominent Muslim American giving campaign is the Muslim Giving Project (MGP), launched by 2013 Stanford University’s Hasso Plattner Institute of Design fellow Nadia Roumani, to provide “Muslim Americans with tools, resources and platform to make secure charitable donations to professionally reviewed projects.” MGP’s goal is to foster a more dynamic charitable culture through blending traditional forms of giving with innovative crowdsourcing platforms.

are often unknown. In Muslim majority countries, official moon-sighting committees announce the official state recognized holiday. In the US, many immigrants follow either Saudi Arabia or the country from which they have immigrated.

On the following page is a list of major holidays and observances. Not all holidays are celebrated with large feasts. Many are observed solemnly in the home, either by fasting during the day and praying during the night. Others such as *Ashura* and *Eid al-Fitr* are publicly observed.



ENGAGEMENT TIP

Visit Muslim Communities during Holidays

Ramadan and *Eid al-Fitr* are good opportunities for outreach events within Muslim communities. Consider hosting an *iftar* (meal to break the fast) or attending one at an area mosque. Many mosques often welcome non-Muslims and sponsor interfaith *iftar* programs or other educational events.

HOLIDAY	ISLAMIC MONTH	SIGNIFICANCE AND CELEBRATION
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Muharram	1st of Muharram	The Islamic New Year
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Ashura	10th of Muharram	Commemorated by both Sunnis and Shi'as. It is the day of the Battle of Karbala when Imam Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad was martyred. Shi'a communities mourn his death throughout the first ten days of Muharram by retelling (or in some cases re-enacting) the events that led to his death. Some Shi'a mourn the fact that they were not present at the battle to fight and save Husayn and his family. 40 days later, Shi'a communities make pilgrimage to the site of his martyrdom in Karbala, Iraq. Sunnis often fast on the day of Ashura to commemorate a number of historical events including the day when Moses and his followers were saved by creating a path in the Red Sea.
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Mawlid al-Nabi*	12th Rabia-awal	<p>PPT 13 Mawlid al-Nabi commemorates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad and is often celebrated amongst Sufi and Shi'a communities globally. In some communities this tradition is frowned upon, but in most Muslim countries throughout the world this celebration is done once a year, and usually involves social activities with families, at mosques and at private homes. Muslim communities often celebrate with <i>nasheeds</i>, which is a type of vocal music that is sung and sometimes accompanied by instruments such as the <i>daf</i> or drum. Mawlid celebrations vary throughout the world, but many feature devotional poetry or songs that commemorate and honor the Prophet's life.</p>
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Eid al-Fitr*	1st of Shawwal	<p><i>Eid al-Fitr</i> commemorates the end of the annual month-long fast during the holy month of <i>Ramadan</i> (the month where Muslims believe the Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad). Muslims gather with family and friends, often starting the day with communal prayers at the mosque, parks or stadiums. Prayer is often followed by festivals for children and visiting family and friends. It is a time to celebrate the end of a communal month of fasting, where Muslims abstain from food, drink and intimacy during the daylight hours. Charity and empathy for the poor is also emphasized during this time.</p> <p>PPT 14</p> <p>PPT 15</p>
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Day of Arafat	9th Dhul Hijjah	It is a day of forgiveness from sins, similar to the Jewish day of Yom Kippur. An optional day of fasting atones for the past year's sins and the sins for the coming year.
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Eid ul-Adha*	10th Dhul Hijjah	The celebration concluding the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. <i>Eid ul-Adha</i> commemorates the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son, Ishmael as an act of obedience to God's command, before God intervened through the angel Gabriel who saw Abraham's ultimate sacrifice and instead was instructed to sacrifice a lamb. In the contemporary world, Muslims celebrate this festival by donating meat to the poor and celebrating with family and friends.
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*Denotes major holidays observed

In-Depth Issues

❖ 1.6 Contemporary Issues Affecting Engagement with Muslim American Communities

This section will explore important issues prevalent in Muslim communities and potential impact on engagement with law enforcement. This section includes Muslim viewpoints on other religions, democracy, *shariah*, the role of women, customs around dress and etiquette when visiting Muslim homes.

❖ 1.6a Islam and Other Religions

Shared Traditions

Muslim communities have a long history of interfaith dialogue and working with other faith communities to solve community-based problems. As an Abrahamic faith, Islam has encouraged interfaith dialogue, understanding and collaboration with Christians and Jews, who are seen as fellow monotheists and fellow believers in one God.

Muslims believe that God’s messages have been revealed to certain communities throughout history and therefore respect the traditions of previous prophets such as Moses and Jesus.¹³ Muslims believe that Muhammad was the final prophet sent by God and that God’s final message was revealed through the Qur’an.

The Qur’an recognizes the Torah and Bible as divine revelations to mankind and honors Christians and Jews as “People of the Book.” In past Muslim empires, People of the Book were able to administer their own laws

concerning personal and family affairs, and they were allowed to consume items that were prohibited by Islam such as pork or wine.

Interreligious Cooperation

Given their shared traditions, Muslims have coexisted with other faiths throughout the world. The precedent for religious tolerance was established in the first constitution of the Arabian city, Medina, in 622 CE in which the Prophet Muhammad ensured religious freedom to its non-Muslims citizens. Subsequent Muslim leaders throughout the world followed this practice until modern times. For example, the first Muslim prince to rule India, Muhammad bin Qasim, vowed to protect even Hindu places of worship. While in Islamic Spain, both Christians and Muslims prayed in the Great Mosque of Cordoba. Many non-Muslims held senior government positions in Muslim states, even serving as Prime Ministers. Samuel Ha-Nagid, for example was a Jewish vizier of Granada as early as the 11th century.

Today, Muslim Americans have founded NGOs and dialogue circles to renew the tradition of working side-by-side with different faiths. In 2011, for example, WORDE established the International Cultural Center (ICC) to engage Montgomery County, MD residents in a wide variety of initiatives that promote pluralism and social cohesion based on mutual respect and harmonious coexistence. One of the cornerstones of ICC’s work is interfaith social action, which seeks to promote acceptance and mutual understanding by mobilizing communities from various faiths, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds to collaborate on community service and cross-cultural programs. Described by WORDE President, Dr. Hedieh Mirahmadi as “Interfaith 2.0” – “Our programs are designed to go beyond engaging faith leaders in theological discussions, to involving communities in hands-on projects to *experience* shared values.”

13. It is customary for Muslims to say “Peace be upon him” (*alayhi as-salām* in Arabic) when referring to prophets from Abrahamic traditions.

SPOTLIGHT

Youth Against Hunger—WORDE’s ICC is an example of how faith communities can work together collaboratively to address community challenges. Our signature interfaith social action program, Youth Against Hunger was originally created in response to the State Department’s call to action, “2011 Hours Against Hate” and has grown into a program that on average provides more than 800 meals to needy families per quarter. The goal is to build awareness around food insecurity issues, foster a sense of social responsibility, tolerance and mutual respect amongst local youth. The program brings together diverse youth of multiple faiths to tackle hunger and food security issues in Montgomery County. Go online to see video and photos from past events: <http://www.theicc.net/programs/social-action-programs/youth-against-hunger>.

❖ 1.6b Islam and Democracy

Food for Thought Questions

PPT 16 1. ___% of Muslim Americans who regularly attend a mosque believe that Islam and the American political system are compatible¹⁴:

- a. 20%
- b. 75%
- c. 95%
- d. 65%

*Correct answer is C

According to a 2009 poll by the Gallup Center for Muslim studies, only 51% of young Muslim Americans are registered voters, “one of the lowest percentages among young Americans surveyed.”¹⁵ However, of those involved, Muslim Americans participate in all steps of the political process from fundraisers led by successful

entrepreneurs, to door-to-door campaigning, to holding political office in state and national legislatures.

PPT 17 2. A 2011 study found that ___ in 10 Muslim Americans say they see no conflict in being devout Muslim and living in modern society—the same ratio of American Christians who say they see no conflict in being devout Christian and living in modern society.¹⁶

- a. 6
- b. 2
- c. 9
- d. 3

*Correct answer is A

PPT 18 3. ___% of U.S. adults think Muslim immigrants want to “remain distinct from the larger culture.”¹⁷

- a. 20%
- b. 90%
- c. 51%
- d. 75%

*Correct answer is C

Muslims around the world traditionally believe that Islam and democracy are compatible – particularly given the religion’s focus on human rights, rule by consent, and the rule of law.

In 632 CE, for example, the Muslim community in Arabia set a precedent by electing their first political leader by consensus. Islamic public intellectuals continued this tradition, outlining principles of good governance and advised sovereigns to safeguard their population against injustice and oppression.

14. Farid Senzai, “Engaging American Muslims: Political Trends and Attitudes,” *ISPU Report*, April, 3, 2012, <http://www.ispu.org/GetReports/35/2457/Publications.aspx>.

15. Mohamed Younis, “Muslim Americans Exemplify Diversity, Potential,” March 2, 2009, *Gallup Center for Muslim Studies*, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/116260/muslim-americans-exemplify-diversity-potential.aspx>.

16. “Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Violent Extremism,” *Pew Research Center*, 2011, <http://people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/Muslim-American-Report.pdf>.

17. *ibid.*

Several democratic principles are enshrined in the Qur'an, and include the following:

EQUALITY: The Qur'an repeatedly states that humanity is created equal regardless of gender, race or religion.

RULE OF LAW: The Qur'an states "obey those in authority from amongst you" (4:59).

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: The Qur'an declares that there can be "no compulsion in religion" (2:256).

The abrogation of these principles by violent extremists (discussed in greater detail in Module 2) is condemned by the majority of Muslims around the world.



Discussion Question

- What stereotypes feed the conception that Islam is not compatible with democracy in America?

❖ 1.6c The Role of *Shariah* in Muslim Lives

S*hariah* is a term that refers to guiding principles for how Muslims should practice their faith. Although *shariah* is overwhelmingly concerned with personal

religious observances, such as prayer and fasting,¹⁸ some political interest groups are concerned that Muslim Americans intend to replace the U.S.' current legal framework with *shariah*.¹⁹ In response, several states have introduced or passed legislation that would bar state judges from considering foreign law (e.g. *shariah*) in their decisions.²⁰

Given the recent political discourse on this issue, it is important to clearly define what *shariah* is and what it **is not**.

- **Shariah IS** Islamic jurisprudence or law that has evolved over time, derived through hundreds of years of scholastic debate on jurisprudence. Traditionally jurists or scholars would study legal texts and scriptures, debating major religious issues like the timings of prayer, the principles of giving charity and divorce procedures. On many religious issues, there is no single verdict of what is considered right or wrong. Over time, these differences contributed to the development of major schools of thought with their own consensus on important issues.
- **Shariah IS NOT** a single, codified law, which could replace the U.S. Constitution, as some may claim.
- **Shariah DOES** consist of several interpretations of how to practice Islam and serves as guidelines or a code of conduct.
- **Shariah IS** overwhelmingly concerned with personal religious observances (e.g. how to pray, prayer timings, marriage/divorce proceedings, dividing inheritance, how to preform pilgrimage, etc.) and guides daily Islamic practices. As such, every practicing Muslim observes/adheres to *shariah*. Therefore, **defining shariah as a threat would erroneously infer that all observant Muslims are a threat.**

18. Wajahat Ali and Matthew Duss, "Young Muslim American Voices: Understanding Sharia Law," *Center for American Progress*, March 31, 2011, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/report/2011/03/31/9175/understanding-sharia-law/>.

19. While this is a political motivation for some violent extremist organizations, the overwhelming majority of Muslim Americans support maintaining the current rule of law and prefer to keep *shariah* in the private realm.

20. Seven states have passed legislation since 2010 that bars state judges from considering foreign law in their decisions. At least 25 other states have introduced similar measures. Kimberly Railey, "More States Move to Ban Foreign Law in Courts," *USA Today*, August 4, 2013, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/08/04/states-ban-foreign-law/2602511/>; "10 State Already Considering Creeping Shariah Bills in 2015," *Imagine 2050*, February 3, 2015, <http://imagine2050.newcomm.org/2015/02/03/10-states-already-considering-creeping-shariah-bills-in-2015/>.



ENGAGEMENT TIP

Shariah in Practice

Shariah guides daily Islamic practices and can be interpreted differently in Muslim communities. Diversity in culture, ethnic background and personal choice can influence Muslims' interpretation and application of Islamic jurisprudence. It's important to recognize that application of *shariah* might look different in various places.

❖ 1.6d The Role of Muslim Women

Another commonly misunderstood topic within Muslim communities is the treatment and role of women. Despite extremists' attempts to denigrate the role of women in society, the majority of Muslims are taught from childhood to honor women according to the Islamic maxim "Heaven is under the feet of your mother." Islam makes no distinction between a Muslim man and woman in faith: both have the same rights and obligations, and are promised equal rewards in heaven.

PPT 19

As such, there are a number of examples of women who have played a prominent role in Islam, spiritually as well politically.

- The iconic Virgin Mary - whom Muslims believe will be the first to enter Paradise - has a whole chapter of the Qur'an dedicated to her and is a role model for Muslim men and women.
- Aisha, a wife of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), is credited for preserving a large number of prophetic traditions, which serve as the basis for Islamic jurisprudence. Incidentally, she was also a respected military leader.
- Two sisters, Maryam and Fatima al-Fihri, founded the world's first university, al-Qarawiyyin, in Morocco in the 9th century.

Given Islam's ancient tradition of women as leaders and exemplars, it is not surprising that in recent years, the largest Muslim countries (Indonesia, Pakistan, Kosovo, Turkey, Senegal and Bangladesh) have elected women as Presidents and Prime Ministers.

In the US, Muslim women are thriving as doctors, university professors and executive directors of NGOs. As mentioned, Muslim American women are one of the most highly educated female religious groups in the United States, and they report incomes more equal to men, compared with women and men of other faiths. Women such as Anousheh Ansari, the first female Muslim in outer-space; Rabia Chaudry, celebrity blogger who raised awareness of the Adnan Syed case and featured on the hit podcast, SERIAL; and G. Willow Wilson, critically acclaimed novelist, are bold role models for young Muslim Americans.



ENGAGEMENT TIP

Cultural Norms for Male/Female Roles

Although Islam provides women several rights and guarantees their equality before God, gender roles and the treatment of women are often informed by local cultural norms. For example, in many patriarchal societies, men have more power and influence in the household than women. When engaging Muslim American communities, it may not be uncommon for men to speak on behalf of the women in their family - particularly if they are questioned by male law enforcement officers. In some instances, women may feel more comfortable to speak to female law enforcement officers in a private setting.



❖ 1.6e Modes of Dress in Muslim Communities

Islam encourages modesty however there is no standard dress code. Each country and each region varies considerably based on cultural norms.

PPT 20

Loose clothing is encouraged for males and females however it is not uncommon to see women wearing headscarves and tight clothes at the same time too. There is an ongoing debate whether Islam mandates women to veil themselves. A “hijab” is the Arabic word for the women’s head covering however, its application varies considerably based on social and cultural norms.

ENGAGEMENT TIP

Physical Inspections of Muslim Women

PPT 21

Some Muslim women wear “niqab,” which fully covers a women’s face except her eyes. If a women’s identity needs to be verified for law enforcement purposes and is not time sensitive, this can be done by a female law enforcement officer in a secluded space. Plan ahead and consider these sensitivities when entering into such situations.

❖ 1.6f Visiting Muslim Homes

Keep in mind the following tips when visiting Muslim homes:

- In non-emergency situations, allow time for females to dress appropriately when answering the door. Keep in mind that a delay in opening the door does not necessarily signal suspicious behavior and that Muslim women value modesty when receiving visitors.
- As in the mosque space, keep in mind that physical contact between opposite genders may be frowned upon, so it may be awkward to initiate a handshake with someone of the opposite sex unless they extend first. Likewise, being alone with a person of the opposite gender is discouraged, so don’t be surprised if Muslims refuse to do so. Especially with Muslim women, plan ahead and make sure same-sex law enforcement officers accompany you to conduct interviews, if possible, particularly for domestic violence investigations.
- Avoid bringing dogs inside, unless absolutely necessary for law enforcement purposes. The fur and/or saliva of a dog can be considered unclean and even disrespectful, especially in a prayer space. Always ask before entering with a dog.



- Muslim families might ask you to join them for a meal. Join if you can, even if you do not plan to eat. Refusing food or drink when offered can be construed as offensive by some.
 - If you do join, note that Muslims often invoke God’s name prior to eating, “*Bismillah*,” (in the name of God).
 - It is acceptable to ask for silverware even if others are not using them.
 - It is considered respectful to hand others dishes, food, and drinks using your right hand.
- If bringing along a gift, flowers, desert and chocolate are appropriate, but never alcohol or pork products.

SPOTLIGHT

PPT 22 Domestic Violence—Domestic violence is not permitted despite misconceptions that Islam allows men to beat their wives. Rulings about the notion of “*wife-beating*” in Islam revolve around a single verse of the Holy Quran and the meaning of the Arabic word *daraba* which is often translated as “to strike.” In the case of the root word *daraba*, one finds this verb used fifty-eight times in the Qur’an, in various forms, each with its own meaning and context. For example, the same verb can be translated as “to tap,” “to mix,” “to mingle,” or “to separate.” Unfortunately, the translation to strike or to beat [albeit lightly] has been used for centuries. Only modern scholars are translating this in the other linguistically and contextually valid ways.

Further, the Prophet Muhammad’s teachings of kindness to women and the many *hadith* (teachings and sayings of the Prophet) in which he prohibited wife-beating demonstrate that *daraba* cannot possibly mean “strike” to violently hurt another. Traditional scholars warn that de-contextualization of the Qur’an is dangerous, especially given the tradition’s rich precedent that allows legal rulings to adapt to the human condition, changing social circumstances and legal framework of the country in which Muslims reside. Law enforcement and other social service providers should do their best to intervene in situations of domestic violence in culturally sensitive ways, keeping in mind that Islam itself does not condone any form of domestic violence. For more information, see WORDE’s 2011 release of a fatwa that prohibits domestic violence.²¹

21. Shaykh M. Hisham Kabbani, “The Prohibition of Domestic Violence in Islam,” *WORDE*, 2011, http://www.worde.org/publications/worde_reports/the-prohibition-of-domestic-violence/.

Effective Engagement with Muslim Communities

Part A illustrated the diversity and multiplicity of Muslim communities in America and key aspects of the faith tradition. Part C will explore negative perceptions that are often barriers to trust between Muslim communities and law enforcement; how to build trust through shared values and relationships with community leaders; tips for innovative engagement through town hall forums; and how to build sustained relationships with Muslim communities through visits to mosques.

❖ 1.7 Impediments to Building Trust with Law Enforcement

In recent years, law enforcement at the federal and local level have increased outreach efforts with Muslim communities. For example, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice holds a quarterly interagency forum to address civil rights and civil liberties issues and other key concerns that affect communities impacted by the backlash of 9/11.²² The DOJ's forum has been successful in opening channels of communication to address community grievances. Topics explored in the forum include efforts to prevent bullying in classrooms, discrimination against minorities in accessing fair housing and employment, safety procedures at airports, and religious land use rights.

Despite continued and committed efforts by many government agencies, there often remains a trust deficit between Muslim communities and law enforcement, in particular. This deficit stems from a number of negative perceptions and experiences law enforcement should consider:

PPT 23

- Negative experiences of immigrants coming from authoritarian regimes where law enforcement has suppressed citizens. In many developing countries, the police have a negative perception in the community for being corrupt and susceptible to bribes.
- Common misperceptions that law enforcement is for the protection of regimes and not for the service and protection of civilians.
- Outreach is sometimes perceived as part of a broader scheme to spy on the community.
- Perception that Muslims are “religiously” profiled, alongside fears of racial/ethnic profiling.
- Fear of being sent to prison based on national security charges without a fair trial, or worse.

These perceptions should be taken into consideration when interacting with Muslim communities. Law enforcement can work to overcome these stereotypes and build trust through greater community engagement **that isn't limited to security issues**, through a number of avenues, discussed in greater detail in Module 3.

Some examples include:

- Attending holiday events—Local police departments could host an iftar for community leaders during *Ramadan*.
- Participating in community celebrations—Work with community leaders to attend activities that commemorate important cultural events such as the Celebration of Spring (*Noruz*), or kite festivals, etc.
- Increase Muslim police officers' interaction with the community.²³
- Facilitating town hall forums to address public

22. <http://www.worde.org/programs/1013-2/departments-of-justice-civil-rights-division/>

23. Muslim police officers can be an asset for conducting Muslim community outreach because they are more likely to be familiar with Islamic cultures and can communicate more fluidly with the Muslim community than a non-Muslim. However, keep in mind that no single Muslim can be expected to act as an ambassador of Islam. Just because someone is Muslim doesn't mean that they are a religious scholar or an anthropologist who will understand divergent Islamic cultures. For example, a Muslim police officer from Senegal might not necessarily be able to reach out effectively to a Pakistani community because of the differences in the two cultures.

safety issues- Work with the community to develop collective solutions. For example, explore avenues through which the local police can assist the mosque in directing pedestrian and vehicle traffic following Friday prayers.

- Hosting educational forums – Invite topical experts to lead community discussions or youth-parent

workshops to address issues that affect young Muslims such as bullying in schools, child safety or services for the homeless population.

- Special outreach efforts for at-risk youth—Participate in sports and cultural events with youth who maybe be considered “hyper-sensitive” to perceived injustices committed by law enforcement.



Discussion Question

- What are some barriers to effective Muslim community engagement that public officials may experience? (*Prompt: limited staffing/resources, limited incentives for improving outreach, lack of general contact with Muslim residents, limited knowledge of who potential community leaders are, etc.*)

SPOTLIGHT

Police Perspective on Barriers to Engagement:

Focus group discussion participants, which involved law enforcement officers, identified several perceived barriers to effective community engagement. Some of the main themes identified were:

- Negative media portrayals of law enforcement and law enforcement relations
- Stereotypes and misinformation (that officers tend to be violent and oppressive)
- Lack of service requests from Muslim communities, for example, “They keep to themselves. We never hear from them.”
- Some Muslim residents have had less time to socialize to norms of the American culture.
- Limited law enforcement staffing and resources
- Lack of continuity or regularity of communication with Muslim communities
- Limited knowledge of where to engage Muslim community leaders
- Lack of personal care/interest or other competing priorities
- Lack of awareness, — *e.g.*, “I didn’t know there were any issues preventing us from better collaborating.”
- Officer (especially liaison officer) turnover



Discussion Questions

- Do any of these perceptions resonate with your experience?
- What are some prospective remedies and opportunities to overcome these barriers, even if they are just perceived barriers?
- What additional resources do law enforcement officials need to overcome some of these challenges?

SPOTLIGHT

Tips from FGDs: Overcoming the Trust Deficit—In the FGDs for this project, the following recommendations for overcoming barriers to trust were provided as part of the Montgomery County Model (discussed in greater detail in Module 3):

- Local law enforcement could host educational, “Law Enforcement 101” seminars for communities to understand what services their local police department can provide to protect communities.
- Long term relationships matter. In the FGD, one participant noted, in the experience of the Montgomery County Faith Community Working Group, having law enforcement frequently attending events was critical for developing long-term relationships with the local police. Over time, community members felt they were on a first-name basis with their local law enforcement officer, and had a direct link to discuss challenges affecting their neighborhoods. Likewise, when there is frequent turnover, one officer noted that police officers should ensure that their successor has had an introductory meeting with their contacts in the community.
- Fostering trust takes time. In the Montgomery County Model, WORDE cultivated support from our stakeholders through organizing several community building initiatives that brought various faith communities together at the International Cultural Center, such as pancake breakfasts, interfaith *iftaars*, social solidarity picnics, and interfaith social action initiatives. Evaluation surveys of our events indicate that, as a result of our programs, participants feel a greater connectivity to people of other faith communities and are more likely to develop new collaborative initiatives with law enforcement and county officials to promote safe and resilient communities.

❖ 1.8 Building Trust by Engaging Local Leadership and Beyond

To begin any outreach effort with the Muslim community, it’s important to reach out to local leaders, both religious and nonreligious figures.

RELIGIOUS FIGURES:

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- Chaplains
- Prayer imams
- Sufi teachers
- *Halaqa* (religious discussion) leaders

COMMUNITY LEADERS:

- Businessmen/women and trade associations
- Educators
- Counselors
- Coaches
- Social activists
- Academics
- Magazine editors
- Boy/girl scouts troop leaders
- Social service providers

It’s important to build relationships with a wide variety of community members, not just religious figures. Businessmen and women, educators and social activists often serve as the backbone of the community, have immense social capital and can educate law enforcement about the dynamics within their community.

When building relationships with Muslim communities, it’s important to emphasize what our communities have in common. Some examples of shared values include:

- Supporting religious freedom of all persons
- Promoting interfaith and interethnic social harmony
- Respecting societal pluralism
- Advocating non-violent solutions for political or

social conflicts

- Preserving our country's rule of law
- Working towards social justice and equality for all members of society

Local thought leaders, academics, organizations and activists who commit to these shared values are well-positioned to engage in partnerships with law enforcement.

ENGAGEMENT TIP

Beyond Leadership

Outreach efforts should not stop with community leaders. Leadership should be utilized *as an access point* to the rest of the community. Ultimately parents and friends of any at risk population are valuable resources in reporting suspicious behavior and conducting community interventions to counter violent extremism (CVE). In the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) for this project, one participant noted that community members—particularly those individuals with direct access to vulnerable individuals are better suited to initiate an intervention than an external institution such as the mosque. Focusing efforts locally and within multiple dimensions of the community is critical for long-term, sustainable engagement. Undoubtedly, this requires time, expertise and resources. This will be further explored below in the section on town hall engagement.

ENGAGEMENT TIP

Engage Beyond Security Issues

To effectively engage Muslim communities, don't focus every outreach opportunity on security or legal issues. Learn what issues are pressing and of most concern for Muslim communities, such as poverty, employment, school safety and readiness, etc. and see how you can help. Also, keep in mind that the average Muslim American is unfamiliar with the term CVE or may think the term stigmatizes the community.

SPOTLIGHT

Shared Values and Common Interests—

Muslims have a long history of working alongside other faith communities on social justice issues based on shared values and common interests. One example is the Common Word initiative launched in 2007 between prominent Muslim and Christian scholars. It's meant to strengthen ties between the two communities based on shared values, principles and desire to improve local communities. More than 400 influential scholars and faith leaders have joined the initiative since its origin. A similar initiative was started in 2010 between Muslim and Buddhist scholars as well.

Another example is the Interfaith Youth Core, originating in Chicago and founded by Eboo Patel, which “brings together young people of different religious and moral traditions for cooperative service and dialogue around shared values.”



Discussion Questions

- Why are shared values important? Reflect on everything you've learned in Part A about the Islamic tradition.
- List three shared values that you can emphasize during your next meeting with community leaders.

❖ 1.9 Locations and Format for Engagement with Muslim Communities—Innovative Town Hall Forums

There are multiple types of public forums that can be organized to facilitate a constructive relationship between communities and public officials. This section explores the utility of town-hall forums and lessons learned from WORDE's Montgomery County Model.

Town hall forums are a great way to bring Muslim community stakeholders together with other communities, and discuss matters of mutual public concern. They can educate communities about threats to public safety and facilitate two-way dialogues in which public officials can learn from the attendees about emerging concerns.

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Town hall forums can serve three important purposes:

- Relationship building—town hall forums can foster better understanding with law enforcement and the various communities they serve.
- Community awareness— town hall forums are an important opportunity for the community to learn about services offered by law enforcement to protect their community. These are great spaces in which to provide community members with contact numbers and online resources to report suspicious behaviors.
- Collaboration—town hall forums allow communities to brainstorm strategies to address issues affecting public safety – including violent extremism. Examples of possible topics include: Internet safety, community preparedness for disasters, improving access social services for vulnerable individuals.

Guidelines for Town Hall Forums

Facilitating a productive and meaningful town hall forum takes preparation, resources and planning. Keep in mind the following tips:

- **Choose community leaders who commit to the shared values mentioned above.** They can serve as key collaborators and can even help sponsor events. The right community leader possesses significant social capital and can mobilize an optimal number of community members to participate.
- **Select a location that facilitates trust-building, such as a community center or a public building (e.g. library).** Avoid hosting town hall forums in law enforcement spaces, which can feel intimidating and can reinforce negative stereotypes. Refreshments are always recommended and allow people to connect at a personal level. Don't forget to serve tea!
- **Engage community members directly in the discussion.** The most effective town hall forums engender trust between local officials and the average worshipper, NOT only local or national leaders. Although some communities may defer to their leaders to speak on their behalf, it's important to include and facilitate engagement by community members directly, even if this might take more time and thought.
- **Set a clear and realistic agenda before the meeting, involving local leaders and community members.** It's important to have community "buy-in" for the issues that will be addressed in the meeting, so setting the agenda should be a collaborative process. Keep in mind that sometimes town hall forums can get derailed by personal grievances or other concerns such as airport security, immigration, racial profiling, etc. A clear and concise agenda can help the meetings

stay focused on a common agenda and issues that affect the community as a whole.

- Bring in subject matter experts when appropriate. When addressing radicalization to violent extremism, invite experts who can inform and provide the community with information to identify warning signs of radicalization. Subject matter experts of multiple forms of violent extremism should be included, where appropriate, to help diverse communities understand the crosscutting dimensions of the violent extremist

threat. Intervention specialists, for example, counselors and psychologists should also be included.

- Organize events with prayer times and dietary restrictions in mind. For example, if the event is held during a prayer time, allow for a break for Muslims to complete their prayers. Also, if holding an event during *Ramadan*, try to be sensitive to the fact that Muslims may not be eating or drinking during the day. If hosting an event close to *iftar* time, be sure to provide a meal and allow time for when Muslims break their fast.

SPOTLIGHT

FCWG Town Hall Meeting—A great example of an effective town hall meeting is the Town Hall on Community Policing with MCDP Chief J. Thomas Manger, hosted by the Montgomery County Faith Community Working Group (FCWG) on March 16, 2015. The town hall addressed topics of race relations, with an eye towards understanding restrictions on the use of force in crisis situations; community policing strategies; and the faith community’s role in engaging with law enforcement to engender trust and mutual respect. The presence of over 20 police officers, many of who stayed on after the event to talk to individuals, highlighted the cooperative spirit of the Town Hall and its emphasis on collaboration between law enforcement and the community at large.

❖ 1.10 Building sustainable Relationships with the Muslim Community—Engagement in Mosques

Mosques are often great spaces to build relationships with the Muslim American community and hosting meetings in the mosque can facilitate trust building. Many Muslims will welcome government officials and non-Muslim community members into the mosque space and appreciate the gesture as a sign of respect and consideration.

Guidelines for Mosque Meetings: Mosques serve diverse groups, however some may cater to a particular ethnic group or religious sect. Be mindful that not every community will behave or practice Islam the same way. Keep in mind the following tips when engaging the Muslim community in this space:

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- Plan ahead and ask about specific protocols from trusted community members. Most mosques will be welcoming to non-Muslims, but in non-emergency situations, it’s always best to ask the community for permission for entry before walking in. They can also brief you on religious etiquette that need to be followed while inside, such as covering one’s head for women, particularly in the prayer area; or gender specific spaces for prayer, etc.
- You will be asked to remove your shoes in a designated location, most commonly at the entrance, outside the door.
- Be prepared to sit on the floor (traditional Islamic style) – if you have bad knees, you can request to sit on a chair or bring a cushion for comfort.
- Use “*As-Salam-u-Alaikum*” (pronounced “us-saa-laam-muu-alie-kum”), meaning “peace be unto you” and other customary greetings to show respect and help foster trust. (See the section above on Muslim greetings.)

- As with Muslim homes, avoid bringing dogs inside, unless absolutely necessary for law enforcement purposes. The fur and/or saliva of a dog can be considered unclean and even disrespectful, especially in a prayer space. If possible, ask before entering with a dog.
- Out of respect, young Muslims may be silent in the presence of elders. They might sit with their heads bowed, avoiding direct eye contact. This does not necessarily mean that they are “hiding” something.



ENGAGEMENT TIP

The Qur'an

As mentioned in Part A, Muslims consider the Qur'an to be the word of God and a sacred text. Often there is etiquette around how the Qur'an is handled and read, especially within the mosque and home space. Before handling the Qur'an, keep in mind the following:

- It is advisable to ask permission before touching a Qur'an.
- Do not place the Qur'an on the floor or place other books on top of it.
- Do not write on or in the Qur'an.
- It is common for Muslims to keep a copy of the Quran in purses, bags, cars, etc.
- Quranic verses are often written in calligraphy and hung in mosques, homes and offices.
- Reciting Quran, for Muslims, is encouraged at all times. Some may recite (silently or out-loud) verses of the Qur'an with a *tasbeeh* or prayer beads.

SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Muslim communities are diverse, multi-faceted and vary not only in cultural practices, languages spoken and socio-economic status, but also in thought, belief and religious practice. Be knowledgeable about the community you're engaging with and work closely with trusted community leaders to learn more.
- Stereotypes hinder engagement with Muslim communities and can impede trust. Understand your own personal biases and challenge assumptions of those around you.
- Islam has a long history of working side-by-side with other faith communities on social justice issues and to formulate solutions to community-based challenges.
- Holidays, such as *Ramadan*, or *Eid al-Fitr*, are good opportunities for outreach events within Muslim communities and are great ways to build relationships, initiate community awareness campaigns and promote collaboration.
- Islam and democracy are compatible and democratic principles are woven throughout the Qur'an.
- Most Muslim Americans believe that *shariah* is overwhelmingly concerned with personal religious observances such as prayer and fasting, and not with national laws. Defining *shariah* as a threat to US national security would infer that all observant Muslims pose a threat.
- Don't limit community engagement efforts to security or legal related issues.
- Work to build trust through engaging key local community leaders—religious leaders, businessmen and women, educators and social activists—and by emphasizing shared values.
- Build trust, respect and mutual understanding by engaging Muslim communities through town hall forums and hosting meetings at mosques. Be knowledgeable about the etiquette of each space, Muslim greetings and how to interact with Muslims of the opposite sex, etc. Rely on trusted community leaders to answer your questions and help you navigate each space.

❖ 1.11 Group Activities: Action Plan and Training Activities

Facilitator's Note: One or both activities can be organized, depending on time and availability

- 1) Create an action plan for hosting a town hall dialogue in your community. As you put together your action plan (agenda, guest list, etc.), consider the following:
 - a. Where will you host the community event?
 - b. Which topics are most pressing to you and the community?
 - c. Who are key community leaders that you can meet with in advance of the meeting?
 - d. Who will you invite to help shape the agenda?
 - e. Formulate your guest list—research local Muslim organizations and different types of mosques in your community. Try to be as inclusive as possible.
 - f. When shaping the agenda, what logistics should you consider? (For example, location, prayer times, catering, and funding resources)

- g. Depending on the topic, which shared values can you emphasize?
- h. Which subject-matter experts can you invite to enhance the discussion?

Optional Activity: Once you have finalized your action plan, share with Muslim community leaders and solicit their feedback.

- 2) Prepare an interactive training presentation about beginning engagement with your local Muslim community center for your fellow law enforcement colleagues. With the knowledge and resources you now have about Muslims communities, create a short presentation that outlines what tips you would provide them? As you put together your presentation, consider the following:

- a. Etiquette around interacting with members of the opposite gender
- b. Engagement opportunities involving religious and cultural holidays
- c. Recommendations for interacting with Muslims in a home space

Common Terminology

- **Allah:** The Arabic word for God, used by Muslims and Arabic-speaking Christians
- **Ahl al-Kitab:** Translated as “people of the book”, it is a term to reference followers of Judaism and Christianity, as members of the other Abrahamic faith traditions for whom God revealed a sacred “book”. The Qur’an refers to the “people of the book” with reverence, emphasizing respect and collaboration between the three Abrahamic faith traditions.
- **Fatwas:** Advisory opinions or religious edicts that should be issued by formerly trained religious scholars. However, extremists often lack the educational qualifications and still claim to be issuing “fatwas”
- **Hadith:** The traditions, teachings, deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad
- **Hijab:** is a veil that covers the head and chest, which is particularly worn by some Muslim woman beyond the age of puberty in the presence of adult males outside of their immediate family
- **Imam:** A prayer leader; can also refer to a leader of a mosque
- **Islam:** The religion of Muslims, derived from the Arabic root word “Salaam” or “Peace”
- **Masjid/Mosque:** House of worship
- **Muslim:** Someone who practices the faith of Islam
- **Qur’an:** Holy scripture for Muslims
- **Shariah:** A moral code and guidance on how to practice Islam
- **Shaykh:** A spiritual guide or teacher and also used in Arabic countries to refer to an elder or community leader
- **Shi’a:** The second largest sect in Islam – estimates vary from 10-15 % of the Muslim population worldwide. Countries with significant Shi’a populations include: Iran, Southern Iraq, Southern Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.
- **Sufism:** The spiritual or mystical component of Islam
- **Sunnah:** Prophet Muhammad’s way of life
- **Sunni:** The majority sect of Islam—estimates vary from 75-90% of the Muslim population worldwide
- **Ulema:** Plural of “Alim” or learned scholar of Islam

Quick Tips for Engagement with Muslim Communities in Town Hall Forums, Mosques and Home Spaces Handout

Town Hall Forums:

- Choose Muslim leaders who commit to shared values and can serve as key collaborators for the event.
- Select a location that facilitates trust-building, such as a mosque or a public library.
- Provide refreshments and allow time for socializing so that participants can connect at a personal level.
- Engage community members directly in the discussion.
- Set a clear and realistic agenda before the meeting, involving local leaders and community members. A clear and concise agenda can help the meetings stay focused on an agreed set of issues that affect the community as a whole.
- Bring in subject matter experts when appropriate.
- Organize events with prayer times and dietary restrictions in mind.

Mosques:

- Plan ahead and ask about specific etiquette and protocols from trusted community members. Most mosques will be welcoming to non-Muslims, but it's always best to ask the community for permission for entry before walking in.
- You will be asked to remove your shoes in a



Islamic Center, Washington, DC

- designated location, mostly commonly at the entrance, outside the door.
- Be prepared to sit on the floor (traditional Islamic style) – if you have bad knees, you can request to sit on a chair or bring a cushion for comfort.
- Using “*As-Salam-u-Alaikum* (pronounced “us-saa-laam-muu-alie-kum”), meaning “peace be unto you” and other customary greetings will show respect and help foster trust.
- Keep in mind that physical contact between opposite genders is frowned upon, so don’t initiate hand shaking with someone of the opposite sex unless they extend first.
- Avoid bringing dogs inside, unless absolutely necessary for law enforcement purposes.
- It is advisable to ask permission before touching a Qur’an.

Home Spaces:

- Allow time for females to dress appropriately when answering the door.
- Being alone with a person of the opposite gender is discouraged, so don't be surprised if Muslims refuse to do so. Especially with Muslim women, plan ahead and for law enforcement, bring same-sex officers to conduct interviews and especially domestic violence investigations, if the situation permits.
- Muslim families might ask you to join in a meal together. Join if you can, even if you do not plan to eat. Refusing food or drink when offered can be construed as offensive by some.
 - Note that Muslims may say grace by invoking God's name prior to eating, by saying "*Bismillah*," (in the name of God).
 - It is acceptable to ask for silverware even if others are not using them.
 - It is considered respectful to hand others dishes, food, and drinks using your right hand
- If bringing along a gift, flowers, desert and chocolate are appropriate, but never alcohol or pork products.

Additional Sources and Suggested Reading List on Islam²⁴

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24. As with other references in this manual, WORDE is not responsible for the content in these resources. All opinions expressed are the sole property of the author and are not meant to represent WORDE.

MODULE TWO

Potential Risk Factors of Radicalization to Violent Extremism

Total Lesson Length: ~ 2.5 hours minimum

Module Structure

Part A: Exploring Potential Risk Factors of Radicalization to Violent Extremism

2.0	Food for Thought and Case Study: “ISIS and the Lonely American” (video and article)	20 minutes
2.1	Background to Conceptualizing Radicalization to Violent Extremism	10 minutes
2.2	Five Potential Risk Factors that Might Influence Radicalization to Violent Extremism	60 minutes

Part B: Identifying Potential Risk

2.3	Assessing Potential Risk Factors	20 minutes
2.4	Group Activity: Three Case Studies	30 minutes
2.5	Community-led Prevention and Intervention of Violent Extremism	10 minutes



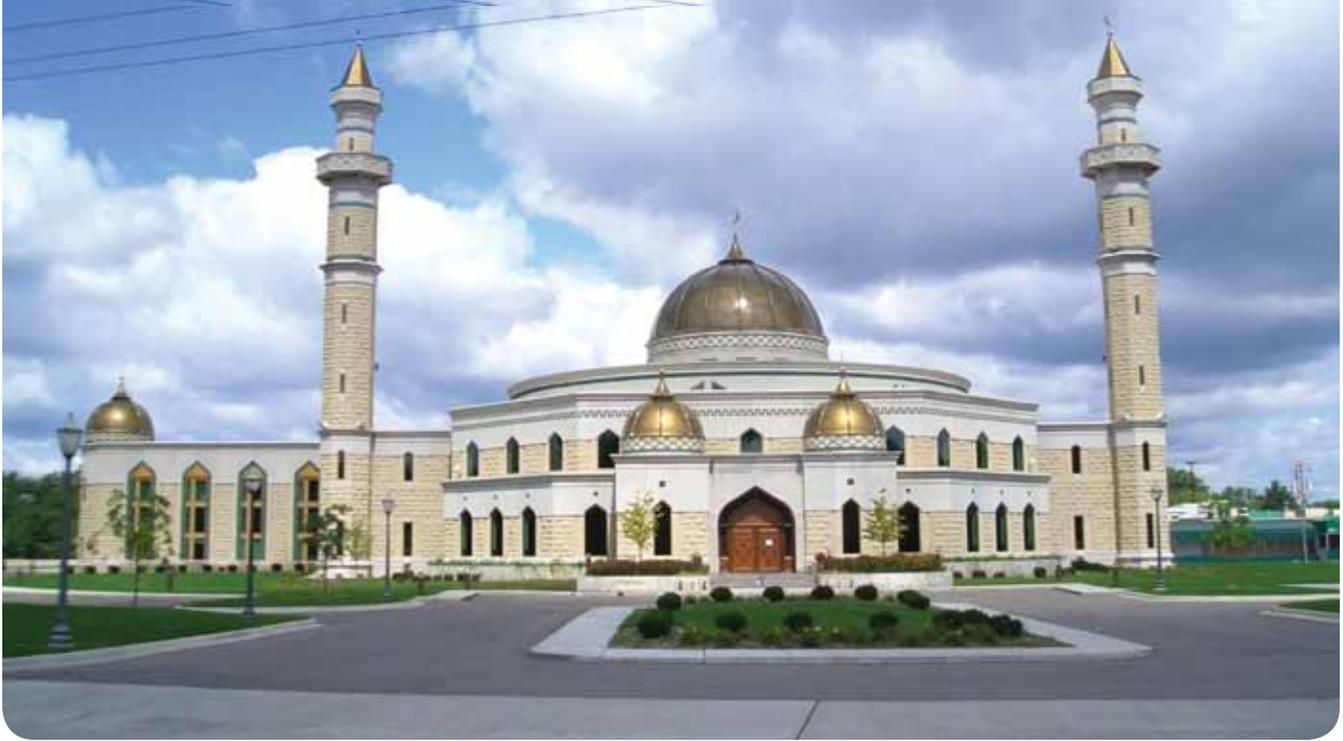


PHOTO: DANE HILLARD

Module Introduction: Module 1 created a foundation for collaborative engagement with Muslim communities. Module 2 will explore factors that might indicate vulnerability to radicalization, enable communities and local government to recognize these factors, and begin to formulate strategies for community-led prevention and intervention of violence programs.

Target Audience: Law enforcement officers, public officials (e.g. county executives, US attorney generals, school board members, etc.), community service providers, counselors, educators, and interfaith partners.

Module Learning Objectives: Upon completing Module 2, participants will be empowered to:

- Articulate that there are multiple, often non-linear pathways to violent extremism.
- Acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all model or reliable profile that can be utilized to anticipate who will become recruited.
- Apply WORDE's *Potential Risk Factors of Radicalization Matrix*²⁵ to design CVE programming, and to develop the structure of an intervention.
- Analyze multiple case studies, identify the indicators of vulnerability present in each case, and begin thinking about how this applies to your local context.

- Design an action plan for identifying potential risk factors within local communities in partnership with community leaders.

Facilitators' Note—*At the beginning of the lesson, establish a baseline with participants to understand their prior experiences addressing the threat of radicalization to violent extremism:*



Discussion Questions

- Before we begin, let's see how many of you are familiar with the term 'home-grown violent extremism'? How would you define it?
- What are some of the factors that you are familiar with that influence an individual's radicalization? (Facilitator: List these on a black/white board).
- Has anyone here had any experience engaging communities to develop programs to prevent violent extremism?

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PART A

Exploring Potential Risk Factors of Radicalization to Violent Extremism

❖ 2.0 Food for Thought and Case Study

***Facilitators Note: This module will draw extensively from the story of the young woman recruited by ISIS in Washington State in early 2015. The article “ISIS²⁶ and the Lonely American,” (New York Times, 2015) may take approximately 30 minutes to read. The article is available online, so students can read the article prior to lesson, or copies of the article can be distributed to students at the beginning of the lesson, allowing them to read the article out loud during the lesson.*

The article is available online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html>

PPT |

This lesson will begin with video and an article that illustrates a case study of an individual who has been recruited by violent extremists.

Play the video on the PowerPoint.

Ask students to read the article, “ISIS and the Lonely American.”²⁷



26. The names ISIS and ISIL may be used interchangeably to refer to the prevalent violent extremist organization operating in Iraq and Syria.

27. Rukmini Callimachi, “ISIS and the Lonely American,” *New York Times*, June 27, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html>.

Facilitator's Note: Brief synopsis of the story:

- The NYT recently published an excellent article, "ISIS and the Lonely Young American" about a young girl, with the pseudonym "Alex" who was radicalized online to support ISIS.
- Alex grew up in a small town in Washington, mostly under the guidance of her grandmother (because her mother was a drug addict).
- Alex was born with fetal alcohol syndrome and suffered from insomnia, which significantly impaired her cognitive and critical thinking capabilities.
- One day she went online to understand why ISIS was beheading Westerners. She posed the question on Twitter, and soon after a recruiter from ISIS contacted her. He explained that the negative perceptions of ISIS were part of the media's propaganda and that they were actually helping people – who had suffered so much under the hands of tyrannical rulers.
- Her recruiter began telling her about Islam – and she eventually converted.
- It's important to note that Alex suffered from social alienation. She had dropped out of college and had difficulty maintaining a stable job. She didn't have any hobbies or recreational interests. She essentially used the internet to fill a void in her life – to occupy her time, and to develop friendships.
- She had no real community to connect with – and her recruiter sought to further alienate her by telling her to keep her conversion to Islam a secret. He also discouraged her from seeking guidance from the local mosque.
- Her new social network comprised of her friends online. Collectively they spent thousands of hours engaging her over more than six months. They sent her money and boxes of chocolate.
- Within a matter of months, Alex began making a plan to travel to Syria.
- Her grandmother became suspicious of all the time that Alex had spent online, and the packages of books and boxes of chocolate that she was receiving. She intervened by intercepting one of the recruiter's Skype calls. He claimed that he never had any malicious intentions with her.
- Her grandmother forbade her to contact her recruiter or any of her new friends, and she forced her to de-activate Alex's social media accounts.
- Without any formal intervention, there are concerns that Alex still harbors sympathetic views towards violent extremist organizations like ISIS.



Discussion Questions

*Facilitator's note: **Provide handout 1** to students and ask them to take 5 minutes to note their responses. (These will be revisited through the module as we explore the five categories of potential risk factors to radicalization.) When students have finished, call upon some individuals to share their responses to the questions:*

- What surprised you? Why?
- Did this article challenge your assumptions of individuals who may be vulnerable to violent extremism?
- What factors contributed to Alex's engagement with her twitter friends? What made her vulnerable to violent extremist recruiters?

❖ 2.1 A Background for Conceptualizing Radicalization to Violent Extremism

Since 2001, a growing body of social science research has emerged to understand the processes of radicalization and to identify individuals who may be vulnerable to recruitment. For the purposes of this module, **radicalization to violent extremism is defined as “the process by which individuals believe that non-state violence is a valid means to address their grievances and/or foster social and political change.”**²⁸

Earlier theories suggested that radicalization occurred in a linear model in which individuals progressed from one phase to the next in their trajectory towards violent extremism. For example, a 2007 report published by the New York Police Department (NYPD), stated that the radicalization process is composed of four distinct and sequential phases: pre-radicalization, self-identification, indoctrination and ‘jihadization.’²⁹ A number of related “conveyor belt” theories suggested that radicalization could be triggered by grievances such as the perceived injustices against Muslims by the West, or a life-altering experience such as bankruptcy or the death of a family member, which leads to a self-exploration of extremist ideologies that ultimately justify the use of violence.

Several studies,³⁰ however, reject this approach, asserting that there are multiple, non-linear pathways to radicalization. In a study that examined risk factors amongst Somali youth, findings indicated that “no one risk factor explained involvement in violent extremism. Rather, it was the interaction of multiple risk factors at

multiple levels that accounted for involvement in violent extremism.”³¹ Further, cases of individuals who have been arrested and/or indicted on terrorism charges—**indicate that there is no “one-size-fits-all” theory of radicalization, or a terrorist profile that can be used to anticipate who will become recruited.** There is significant diversity in profiles of these individuals, making it impossible to create a profile based on age, location, education, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, family relations or religious background.³²

KEY TERM

Radicalization to violent extremism—the process by which individuals believe that non-state violence is a valid means to address their grievances and/or foster social, political, or economic change.



28. “Radicalization Dynamics: A Primer,” *National Counterterrorism Center*, June 2012.

29. Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt, “Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat,” New York City Police Department, 2007, http://www.nypdshield.org/public/SiteFiles/documents/NYPD_Report-Radicalization_in_the_West.pdf.

30. See for example, Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-first Century*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2008; and “Radicalization Dynamics: A Primer,” National Counterterrorism Center, June 2012.

31. Stevan Weine and Osman Ahmed, “Building Resilience to Violent Extremism Among Somali-Americans in Minneapolis-St. Paul,” *National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism*, August 2012, http://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/publications/Weine_BuildingResiliencetoViolentExtremism_SomaliAmericans.pdf.

32. John Horgan, “Individual Disengagement: A Psychological Analysis,” In T. Bjoerjo & J. Horgan (Eds.), *Leaving Terrorism Behind* (pp. 17–28). New York, NY: Routledge; and John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, Routledge, New York, 2014, page 87.

SPOTLIGHT

PPT 2 The Growing Threat of HVE in

2015—Homegrown violent extremism (or HVE) remains one of America’s prominent national security threats. FBI reports indicate that up to 3,000 individuals in the US may be vulnerable to HVE and are actively being targeted by ISIS recruiters;³³ and there are 900 active investigations against suspected ISIS-inspired operatives and other home-grown violent extremists across the country.³⁴ Moreover, it is estimated almost 200 U.S. persons have travelled or attempted to travel to Syria to support terrorist organizations.³⁵ In addition to recruiting individuals to support violent extremist organizations (VEOs) abroad, some organizations like ISIS and Al-Qaeda encourage radicalized individuals to carry out attacks on US soil. Most violent extremist plots, such as the 2009 Fort Hood shooting carried out by Nidaal Hassan, are executed by ‘lone-wolf’ terrorists who are not connected operationally to a larger foreign terrorist organization. As a result, it is difficult for law enforcement officials to identify and disrupt such plots.³⁶

In addition to violent extremism associated with groups such as ISIS or Al-Qaeda, white nationalist movements pose a significant domestic threat. According to the New America Foundation, since September 11, 2001, white nationalist movements, Sovereign Citizens (anti-government extremists) and other non-Muslim extremists are responsible for nearly twice as many deaths in the US than by supporters of Islamist extremism.³⁷ Moreover, the Anti-Defamation League has described this broad movement as “by far the most violent, committing about 83% of the extremist-related murders in the United States in the past 10 years and being involved in about 52% of the shootouts between extremists and police.”³⁸



Instead of a linear progression, radicalization to violent extremism is multi-faceted, interconnected and often entails overlapping potential factors that contribute to one’s proclivity towards extremism. Adapting a “cluster model” approach similar to the approach utilized by the Department of Homeland Security,³⁹ **WORDE has identified five clusters of potential risk factors of radicalization: sociological motivators; psychological conditions; ideology/belief/and values; political grievances; and economic factors** (see figure 1 on the following page). These factors will be explored in greater detail in section 2.2.

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33. Threat Briefing by Michael Steinbach, Assistant Director of the FBI, at the “Developing Community-based Strategies to Prevent Targeted Violence and Mass Casualty Attacks” Conference at FBI Headquarters, July 22, 2015.
 34. Kevin Johnson, “Come: Feds Have Roughly 900 Domestic Probes about Islamic State Operatives, Other Extremists,” USA Today, October 23, 2015, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2015/10/23/fbi-comey-isil-domestic-probes/74455460/>
 35. Barbara Starr, “A Few Dozen Americans’ in ISIS Ranks,” CNN, July 15, 2015 <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/15/politics/isis-american-recruits/>
 36. “Age of the Wolf: A Study of the Rise of Lone Wolf and Leaderless Resistance Terrorism,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, February 12, 2015.
 37. Scott Shane, “Homegrown Extremists Tied to Deadlier Toll than Jihadists in US Since 9/11,” *New York Times*, June 24, 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/tally-of-attacks-in-us-challenges-perceptions-of-top-terror-threat.html>
 38. “With Hate in their Hearts: the State of White Supremacy in the US,” *Anti-Defamation League*, July 13, 2015, <http://www.adl.org/combatting-hate/m/state-of-white-supremacy-in-the-united-states/>
 39. “Assessment: A Model for Understanding the Motivations of Homegrown Violent Extremists,” *Department of Homeland Security*, December 16, 2011.

Potential Risk Factors of Radicalization

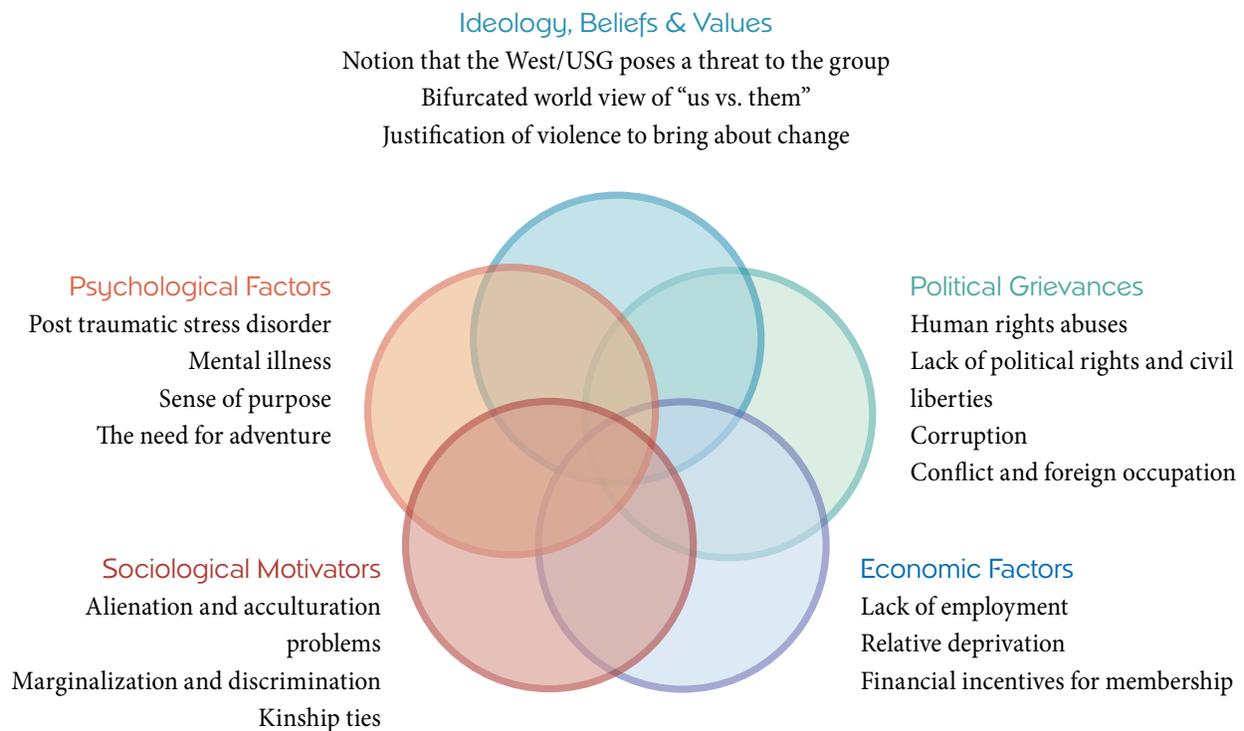


FIGURE 1. © WORDE

In the matrix above, each bubble represents a set of potential risk factors or drivers of violent extremism. Within each category, there are multiple “push” and “pull” factors highlighted that may influence an individual’s susceptibility to radicalization. Push factors are defined as “the negative social, cultural and political features of one’s societal environment that aid in “pushing” vulnerable individuals onto the path of violent extremism.” Pull factors are “the positive characteristics and benefits of an extremist organization that “pull” vulnerable individuals to join.”⁴⁰ It is important to note that these factors can independently have an effect on an individual, **or several factors can overlap and have**

a cumulative impact. It is also important to note that increased religiosity is NOT a potential risk factor of violent extremism.

KEY TERM

Push factors—the negative social, cultural and political features of one’s societal environment that aid in “pushing” vulnerable individuals onto the path of violent extremism.

Pull factors—the positive characteristics and benefits of an extremist organization that “pull” vulnerable individuals to join

40. Muhsin Hassan, “Understanding Drivers of Violent Extremism: The Case of al-Shabab and Somali Youth,” *CTC Sentinel*: Volume 5: Issue 8, (August 12, 2012): 18.

As we explore each of the five factors, it's helpful to keep in mind the following:

- This module focuses on violent extremism perpetrated by Muslims, but it's important to note that **WORDE's Potential Risk Factors of Radicalization Matrix can apply to any form of violent extremism.**
- This framework was developed using terms such as 'risk factor' or 'indicators of vulnerability' in the colloquial sense. It is important to note that scientifically, 'risk factors' may assume that risk is quantifiable, or that there is a proven causal link between two factors (for example, smoking is a common risk factor of lung cancer). However because there are no studies to date that have demonstrated a causal link between any one risk factor, or combination of factors, and an individual becoming a terrorist, **our use of the term 'risk factor' is not predictive of who will become radicalized.** Instead, it represents a structured guide to explore variables that have a **potential** to contribute to one's radicalization.
- These factors have been identified based on empirical research on convicted terrorists and terrorist incidents. Given that common factors exist in many of those cases, the factors are grouped into five clusters to provide a systematic way of identifying potential risks of an individual who may be more vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization.
- Local context matters. As we explore each potential risk factor in greater detail, **it's important to contextualize the model for each region, as some factors may be more relevant for individuals in certain regions and contexts than others.** For example, some regions that have prevalent poverty indicators (*e.g.* low income levels, or high unemployment rates) may



Discussion Question

- Do you see similarities/differences between the factors we discussed in the very beginning of the lesson? (Refer to the list of potential risk factors that may influence radicalization on the black/white board)

create ripe conditions for recruiters offering material incentives for individuals to join.

ENGAGEMENT TIP

Local Context Matters!

Think about the relationships you've built with community leaders in Module 1. Religious leaders, social service providers, along with businessmen and women, educators and social activists can be instrumental in identifying potential risk factors. Plan a meeting or town hall forum with these stakeholders to determine which factors are most prevalent in your jurisdiction and specific strategies to address each.

❖ 2.2 Five Potential Risk Factors that might Influence Radicalization to Violent Extremism

We will now explore each category of *potential* risk factors in greater detail. Where appropriate, we will also explore relevant extremist narratives that relate to these factors.

❖ 2.2a Sociological Motivators

The fact that sociological factors such as group dynamics and kinship ties, in particular, familial, tribal, and peer groups, have contributed to radicalization is well documented in previous research.⁴¹ A 2006

41. *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, ed. by Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin, Rand, 2009. See also Erin Saltman and Melanie Smith, "Till Martyrdom Do Us Part," Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2015, page 13 for a discussion of the conceptualization of "sisterhood bonds" that pull individuals towards joining violent extremist organizations.

study of European extremists, for example, noted that for more than 35% of the sample population, social networks that had existed prior to joining militant groups played a

critical role in the radicalization process.⁴² Such networks can exert peer pressure, and other means to influence individuals to support their extremist activities.

SPOTLIGHT

PPT 5

The Use of Digital Social Networks to Recruit and Radicalize Individuals—According to the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, “The Internet provides radical recruiters with a more fertile ground for recruitment and more opportunities to interact with people who would not otherwise be reachable by conventional means. Using a combination of traditional websites; mainstream social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube; and other online services, extremists broadcast their views, provoke negative sentiment toward enemies, incite people to violence, glorify martyrs, create virtual communities with like-minded individuals, provide religious or legal justification for proposed actions, and communicate with and groom new recruits.”⁴³

As part of their recruitment strategy, groups such as ISIS use the Internet and social media to seek out and target vulnerable individuals, sending tens of thousands of messages per day to disseminate their extremist ideology and to incite violence. They communicate through social media, apps, online magazines and blogs, and Q&A forums, and they disseminate their propaganda on video or photo sharing websites such as YouTube and Instagram.



Discussion Questions

- Why do you think social media networks are such powerful vehicles for online recruitment? *(Possible answers include: they address vulnerable individuals’ search for belonging by facilitating access to a new social network of like-minded individuals; constant communication with members of a social network can counter feelings of social alienation; digital media can provide an echo chamber to reinforce extremist ideologies.)*
- What could potentially make people, especially youth like Alex, more susceptible to online radicalization? *(Possible answers include: sociological factors such as a limited social network /lack of peer support and loneliness.)*
- Recruiters and influencers can rapidly identify vulnerable individuals and they often tailor their interactions to appeal to potential risk factors of each target. Alex suffered from depression, social alienation and a lack of a sense of purpose to her life. How did her extremist ‘friends’ take advantage of this? *(Possible answers include: they validated her, gave her gifts and provided constant positive reinforcement, and maintained constant communication with her – as a result, she immediately felt like she had a circle of friends she could trust, and she felt loved by one man in particular.)*

42. Edwin Bakker, “Jihadist Terrorist in Europe,” Security Paper No. 2, Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, December 2006.

43. “Awareness Brief: Online Radicalization to Violent Extremism,” Community Oriented Police Services, US Department of Justice, 2014.

Lack of parental and community involvement in a vulnerable individual's life can also contribute to one's sense of social alienation. For example, a case study on American Somalis in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota, asserts that the one of the biggest risk factors for youth joining violent extremist groups was, "the times when adolescent boys are not answerable to parents or other adults and are in spaces where they are out of their sight."⁴⁴

A lack of developmental assets might also make a young individual, more vulnerable to a wide range of destructive actions, including violent extremism.⁴⁵

KEY TERM

Developmental Assets—Developmental Assets—particular factors that help children grow into healthy, caring and responsible adults.

Provide handout #3 to students, for their reference, and PowerPoint Slide 6

PPT 6

Assets refer to both external and internal factors that help kids grow. External assets can include having positive family support, positive family communication, safety (at home, school and in one's neighborhood), having positive role models and positive peer influence, etc. Internal assets can include achievement motivation (a desire to do well in school), possessing a healthy sense of empowerment, setting appropriate boundaries and expectations, developing social competencies and maintaining a positive sense of self-esteem and identity.

In order to develop these skills, one requires a cadre of trusted, nurturing adults, including family, teachers and community members.



Discussion Question

- Alex was born with fetal alcohol syndrome and was raised by her grandmother and as a result, may have challenges with certain development assets. Which developmental assets could the community help to foster? (Possible answers include: achievement motivation, responsibility, decision making, interpersonal competence, self-esteem and a sense of purpose).

Further, as with a lack of developmental assets, a lack of protective resources can lead to greater vulnerability, especially for youth. Protective resources are social and psychosocial factors that can stop, delay, or diminish negative outcomes.⁴⁶ Protective resources often stem from families, communities, and trusted institutions and can reside in parents, extended family, teachers, religious leaders, coaches, and elders. Protective resources, often in the form of healthy relationships, promote social wellbeing and can be crucial to preventing at-risk individuals from recruitment by terrorist organizations. For example, a U.K. study that tracked women who joined ISIS indicates that, "there is strong evidence to suggest that women's families have a strong influence in terms of persuading some prospective female migrants at least to delay, if not reject migration entirely."⁴⁷ Often protective factors provide emotional and practical influence that can prevent vulnerable individuals from radicalizing.

44. Mina Al-Lami, "Studies of Radicalisation: State of the Field Report," Royal Holloway University of London, January 2009, and Stevan Weine, "Building Resilience to Violent Extremism Among Somali-Americans in Minneapolis-St. Paul," *National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism*, August 2012, http://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/publications/Weine_BuildingResiliencetoViolentExtremism_SomaliAmericans.pdf

45. <http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18>

46. Stevan Weine, "Building Resilience to Violent Extremism Among Somali-Americans in Minneapolis-St. Paul."

47. Carolyn Hoyle, Alexandra Bradford and Ross Frenett, "Becoming Mulan? Female Western Migrants to ISIS," *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, 2015.

KEY TERM

Protective Resources—are social and psychosocial factors that can stop, delay, or diminish negative outcomes.



Discussion Question

- Which protective resources could the community help to foster? (Possible answers include: circle of friends, mentors or trusted adults from which to receive guidance and talk through challenges; lack of social circles in general).

SPOTLIGHT

Social Alienation and Lone Wolf Terrorism: 74% of terrorist attacks in the U.S. over the past six years were conducted by lone wolves - or terrorists who act without direct support or influence from a group.⁴⁸ A Department of Justice study indicates that these terrorists are more likely to broadcast their intent to commit acts of violence or terrorism than violent extremists who operate under the guidance of terrorist organizations.⁴⁹ Broadcasting intent is when an individual publically articulates (whether in person, or online through text messages, emails, pictures/memes, social media posts, or videos) their intent to engage in, or their active involvement in behaviors that may harm themselves or others. Broadcasting intent is a common behavior amongst violent extremists, particular lone wolf terrorists. Amongst post 9/11 lone wolf terrorists, about 76% broadcasted their intent, often more than once. Intent has even been indicated in letters to Congress and the President of the United States and in town hall meetings and protest rallies.⁵¹

Additionally, there is a strong association between mental illness and social isolation, and lone wolf terrorism.⁵² For example, 61% of lone wolf terrorists had previous contact with mental health services.⁵³ Therefore, it is important for social service providers, law enforcement, teachers, counselors and parents to take note of vulnerable individual's speech and social media postings that might indicate support for violent extremist groups. Keep in mind, though, that content that is sympathetic towards violent extremism may not necessarily lead to violent or destructive behaviors. Individuals, who do broadcast their intent to engage in violence, could be referred to law enforcement or to a crisis intervention team to assess whether the individual poses eminent threat to national security. If an eminent threat does not exist, a pre-criminal intervention, such as counseling should be arranged to mitigate any potential risk factors affecting the individual.

48. "Lone Wolf Report," Southern Poverty Law Center, February 11, 2015. <https://www.splcenter.org/20150212/lone-wolf-report>.

49. Mark Hamm and Ramon Spaaj, "Lone Wolf Terrorism in America: Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to Forge Prevention Strategies," Department of Justice, February, 2015, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/248691.pdf>.

50. Mark Hamm and Ramon Spaaj, "Lone Wolf Terrorism in America: Using Knowledge of Radicalization Pathways to Forge Prevention Strategies," February 2015 <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/248691.pdf>

51. *ibid.*

52. Emily Corner and Paul Gill, "A False Dichotomy? Mental Illness and Lone-Actor Terrorism," *Law and Human Behavior*, Vol.39, No. 1 (2015): 23-34.

53. *ibid.*

❖ 2.2b Psychological Factors

Psychological factors such as cognitive, mental or emotional states of being might also contribute to one's vulnerability and propensity towards violent extremism. One body of research indicates that some people join extremist groups as part of a 'quest for significance,' or a desire that one's life has purpose and meaning.⁵⁴ It is important to note that, while developing a sense of personal meaning and significance is a common need for all humans, for some, the inability to derive personal significance might increase one's propensity to join a group that offers acceptance and a sense of belongingness. Moreover, circumstances that erode one's sense of self-worth, such as personal trauma, shame, humiliation and discrimination, have also been asserted to play a major role in cultivating support for violent extremism.⁵⁵

Searching for a sense of purpose is often associated with the need for adventure, glory, and other thrill-seeking complexes.⁵⁶ Extremist groups capitalize on this, and attempt to recruit individuals to join them by utilizing action-oriented videos that feature scenes of militants training, fighting, and celebrating battle victories, or by sharing personal testimonies of fighters who joined their cause to escape the mundane nature of their lives. Such narratives might have a particular appeal to young men and women during their psychologically formative years.⁵⁷

54. Kruglanski, A. W., Chen, X., Dechesne, M., Fishman, S., & Orehek, E., "Fully Committed: Suicide Bombers' Motivation and the Quest for Personal Significance," *Political Psychology*, Volume 30, Issue 3 (2009): 331-357.

55. Sarah Lyons, Michelle Gelfand, Hedieh Mirahmadi, Mehreen Farooq, "The Struggle to Belong: Immigrant Marginalization and Risk for Radicalization," (forthcoming).

56. Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile, "Radicalisation and Al-Shabaab Recruitment in Somalia," *Institute for Security Studies*, 2014.

57. *ibid.*

58. Carolyn Hoyle, Alexandra Bradford and Ross Frenett, "Becoming Mulan? Female Western Migrants to ISIS," *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, 2015.

59. *ibid.*

60. Katrin Bennhold, "Jihad and Girl Power: How ISIS Lured 3 London Teenagers," *New York Times*, August 17, 2014, <http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/jihad-and-girl-power-how-isis-lured-3-london-teenagers/ar-BBINPpP>.

61. *ibid.*

62. *ibid.*

SPOTLIGHT

The Women's Radicalization to Violent Extremism

—A recent U.K. study cited that increasing numbers of western women (close to 550 including women from U.S., Canada, Europe and Australia) have travelled to Syria to join ISIS, some even with young children.⁵⁸ While ISIS has forbidden them from engaging in combat, women are instrumental in recruiting and assisting others who want to join and drive many other operational aspects of the regime. The study cites issues of belonging and identity as key driving factors in their decision to travel. The study tracked female migrants through their social media accounts and many were "searching for meaning, sisterhood and identity."⁵⁹ Many of these women are young, in their early 20s and from diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. Most are extremely well educated and high-achieving, but had felt some type of isolation socially or culturally in western countries.

ISIS is utilizing "girl-to-girl" recruitment strategies that promise young women comradery, a sense of purpose and empowerment.⁶⁰ In an interview, Tasnime Akunjee, a lawyer who represents the families of three British girls who left to join ISIS, comments that, "in their world, going to Syria and joining the so-called caliphate is a way of 'taking control of your destiny.' It's about choice — the most human thing," Akunjee said. "These girls are smart, they are A students. When you are smarter than everyone else, you think you can do anything."⁶¹ Police and school officials failed to recognize the many of the warning signs that foreshadowed their departure, vulnerabilities that ISIS targeted through online recruitment strategies, gendered imagery and iconic memes.⁶²

Moner Mohammad Abu-Salha: July 2014, Moner Mohammad Abu-Salha, who at 22, became the first American to be a suicide bomber in Syria.

- He grew up in Florida in a gated community, and enjoyed playing basketball and videogames.
- As an adult, he struggled financially, dropped out of college, and ultimately decided to join militants in Syria, with the belief that militancy would provide a greater purpose to his life.

In his farewell video he states, “[Participating in militancy] is the best thing I’ve ever done my whole life. I lived in America. I know how it is. You have all the fancy amusement parks, the restaurants, and the food... You think you’re happy? You’re not happy. You’re never happy. I was always sad and depressed. Life sucked. I had to walk from my work [to] home...all you do is work 40, 50, 60 hours a week, then you go waste it on garbage, and then you do the same thing. This is what you do your whole life.”

Play the video on the PowerPoint



Discussion Questions

- What do think might be some of the possible factors that could have affected Abu-Salha’s radicalization process?
- How does Abu Salha’s case study compare to Alex’s? Could they have been affected by the same potential risk factors?

Mental illnesses, in particular post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) are posited as another major push factor of violent extremism. Individuals exposed to prolonged periods of violence, often exhibit psychological symptoms akin to PTSD,⁶³ which in turn might lead to a great propensity and vulnerability to engage in revenge or violent acts.⁶⁴

Studies have also posited higher rates of depression to a propensity towards radicalization.⁶⁵ While there is no evidence to suggest terrorists have higher levels of severe mental illness than the general population, depressive and anxiety symptoms are more prevalent in those who sympathize with violence acts or terrorism.⁶⁶ This is particularly relevant for lone offenders, who have been found to have a significantly higher rate of mental illness than group-offenders (40% vs. 7.6%).⁶⁷

2.2c Ideologies, Beliefs and Values

Al-Qaeda, ISIS and similar terrorist groups heavily rely on extremist ideologies to build their support base – particularly on beliefs that **foment intolerance and hatred, and justify the use of violence to address grievances**. For some individuals, extremist beliefs can spark the process of radicalization, however for others, adherence to extremist beliefs can occur after an individual has already begun supporting a terrorist group.⁶⁸ In addition, extremist ideologies sustain an individual’s commitment to violent extremist groups.⁶⁹ **It is important to note, that just because an individual holds**

63. “Recruitment and Radicalization of School-Age Youth by International Terrorist Groups,” *Homeland Security Institute*, 2009.

64. “Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together,” *Rand Corporation*, 2009.

65. Kamaldeep Bhui, Brian Everitt & Edgar Jones, “Might Depression, Psychosocial Adversity, and Limited Social Assets Explain Vulnerability to and Resistance Against Violent Radicalization?,” in *PLOS ONE*, ed. Paul Davis & Kim Cragin, 2014.

66. *ibid.*

67. Emily Corner and Paul Gill, “A False Dichotomy? Mental Illness and Lone-Actor Terrorism,” *Law and Human Behavior*, 2015, Volume 39, Number 1, pp 23-43.

68. John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, Routledge, New York, 2014, page 87.

69. *ibid.*

extremist views, this does not make them a potential violent criminal.

Extremist beliefs and ideologies might:

- **Spark** the process of radicalization
- Occur **after** an individual has already begun supporting a violent extremist group
- **Sustain** an individual's commitment to a violent extremist group

Violent extremist beliefs are often reinforced by deviant interpretations of religious discourses.⁷⁰ Although the focus of this manual is on violent extremism perpetuated by Muslims, it is important to note that **violent extremism is not limited to any single faith community.** According to Krueger and Laitin “No religion appears to have a monopoly on terrorism; countries with very different religious faiths have all experienced terrorism, as target, origins, and hosts.”⁷¹

Over the past fifty years, however, the use of Islamic discourses to justify terrorism has become increasingly prominent. For example, Osama bin Laden's first *fatwa* (religious opinion) against the US issued in 1996 begins with numerous references to the Qur'an and *hadith* (prophetic traditions), which provide a religious overtone to his justification for the use of violence in response to his grievances with US foreign policy.⁷² Several other *fatwas* issued by extremist clerics such as Anwar al-Awlaqi⁷³ issue calls to support anti-state violence, heavily interspersed with religious rhetoric. These edicts are based on deviant understandings of religious texts that rely on literalistic interpretations that circumvent over 1400

years of scholarly exegesis. Previous studies⁷⁴ and public opinion data⁷⁵ indicate that the vast majority of Muslims around the world reject these concepts. However, extremist ideologies resonate amongst some individuals, particularly those who have a limited understanding of their religion, especially recent converts. In a 2004 study, Marc Sageman found that only 18 percent of violent extremists received religious primary or secondary education.⁷⁶ The exposure of militants' deviant interpretations is also cause for some to leave extremist groups. In a 2010 study of 25 former violent extremists, Michael Jacobson found that former militants cited al-Qaeda's inaccurate interpretation of Islam as a major factor in their decision to leave.⁷⁷



Discussion Questions

- In Alex's story, why do you think the recruiter convinced her to avoid the local mosque? (Possible answers include: He was trying to further isolate her; he didn't want her to seek guidance from mainstream Muslims.)
- Reflect back on what was learned in Module 1 about shared values. Why is it important that Muslim communities, law enforcement agencies and the general public possess an understanding of the basic tenets of mainstream Islam and shared values with other faiths?
- How do extremists exploit misunderstanding and stereotypes of Islam?

70. It is important to note that religiosity is not necessarily a potential risk factor of violent extremism.

71. Krueger, Alan B., and David D. Laitin, “Kto Kogo? A Cross-Country Study of the Origins and Targets of Terrorism,” in Philip Keefer and Norman Loayza, eds., *Terrorism, Economic Development, and Political Openness*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 148–173.

72. “Bin Laden's Fatwa,” PBS Newshour, August 23, 1996 http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/military-july-dec96-fatwa_1996/.

73. See for example, “A Call to Jihad,” <http://worldanalysis.net/modules/news/article.php?storyid=1311>.

74. See for example, J. Scott Carpenter, Matthew Levitt, Steven Simon, and Juan Zarate, “Fighting the Ideological Battle: The Missing Link in U.S. Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/StrategicReport04.pdf> and “Rewriting the Narrative: An Integrative Strategy for Counterradicalization,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 2009, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PTF2-Counterradicalization.pdf>.

75. Frida Ghitis, “A Spark of Good News from the Mideast,” CNN, July 10, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/10/opinion/ghitis-mideast-polls/>.

76. Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terrorist Networks*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

77. Michael Jacobson, “Terrorist Dropouts: Learning from those who have Left,” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, Policy Focus #101, January 2010.

SPOTLIGHT

Countering Extremist Narratives—Al Qaeda and other similar violent extremist organization’s use of religious infused narratives presents a challenge for the U.S. government to address ideological risk factors, as the government has neither the expertise nor authority to involve itself in religious based discourse.⁷⁸

However, there are indications that the U.S. government may be shifting its approach to empowering communities — with a particular emphasis of engaging religious leaders — to counter extremist narratives. For example, in a keynote address honoring Special Representative to Muslim communities Shaarik Zafar, Secretary John Kerry noted that ‘religion matters’ is a “mantra here at the State Department in our foreign policy, and I see it every single day.”⁷⁹ The establishment of the Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives at the State Department further indicates the U.S. government’s is engaging more religious leaders and faith-based organizations in supporting foreign policy objectives such as CVE. Since 2001, programing to support religious leader engagement has also increased. These programs range from critical thinking or English language training programs for madrasa educators, and professional exchange opportunities (such as the State Department’s International Visitors Leadership Program) for religious leaders.

Moreover, President Barak Obama and Secretary Kerry have challenged extremist narratives using religious discourses in several keynote addresses relating to the threat posed by the militant group ISIS. In his address to the UN General Assembly in September 2014, for example, President Obama noted that the US is not at war with Islam and he clarified that Islam is a religion of peace, which should not be conflated with the extremist ideologies propagated by militants such as ISIS.

The following section explores these extremist narratives in greater detail and how they can potentially contribute to individuals’ radicalization processes:

1. Narrative: The West Poses a Threat to the Group

PPT 8 A prominent extremist narrative is that the ‘West’ has launched a war against Islam and Muslims.⁸⁰ Al-Qaeda, ISIS and other terrorist groups contend that Muslims must unify to defeat this threat and re-establish an Islamic state, or Caliphate. Supporters of this narrative point to US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, drone attacks in Pakistan, the establishment of military bases in Muslim majority countries, human rights abuses against Muslims in Guantanamo Bay, civil rights infringements, US support for Israel, and Washington’s reluctance to support regime change in authoritarian states in the Middle East. This narrative is often reinforced with political grievances (e.g. images of Muslims suffering as a result of US foreign policy) and feature prominently in recruitment videos and extremist propaganda.⁸¹



Discussion Questions

PPT 9

Play the video on the PowerPoint

- Watch the recruitment video and reflect on the following — What do you see? What are some of the main themes of this video? Why do you think some people would find these images motivational for joining?
- How is the West seen as oppositional to Islam?

78. Given the Constitution’s Establishment Clause in the first amendment, the U.S. government is prohibited from establishing an official religion or favoring any religion.

79. “Kerry on Special Representative to Muslim Communities, Zafar,” *US Department of State Press Release*, September 3, 2014, <http://translations.state.gov/st/english/text-trans/2014/09/20140903307458.html#ixzz3LbvGH5BQ>.

80. Mitchell D. Silber, Testimony for the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, November 19, 2009.

81. Erin Saltman and Melanie Smith, “Till Martyrdom Do Us Part,” *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, 2015.

2. Narrative: Bifurcated Worldview of “Us vs. Them”

Violent extremists often propagate a bifurcated worldview in which Muslims are at odds with non-Muslims and in a constant state of conflict. Although ascribing to such a worldview would not necessarily lead one to engage in violence, previous research suggests that it can create a propensity to affiliate or support terrorism in various ways. **According to Borum, for example, “worldviews can be both drivers and products of psychological propensities that may increase receptivity to extremist ideology and perhaps to justifications for terrorist violence.”**⁸²

Violent extremist worldviews are often framed with simple, binary ‘us versus them,’ ‘right versus wrong,’ or Manichean ‘good versus evil’ rhetoric – representative of value monism. Unlike value pluralism, in which multiple values are considered equally valid and respected, extremist beliefs are underpinned by value monism, the understanding that a particular viewpoint is considered absolute and often non-negotiable. According to Liht and Savage, “the inability to make trade-offs between competing values results in low complexity reasoning.”⁸³ This myopic reasoning promotes intolerance and is often used by extremists to justify **violence against those who do not ascribe to their belief structures.**

Takfirism (from the Arabic word, *takfir*) is the practice of calling that anyone who does not practice Islam, according to violent extremist definitions, is deemed an unbeliever and may be killed. This is especially true for the way many young Sunni’s in Iraq and Syria are told to perceive the Shiites and those supporting the Asaad or Maliki regimes. Further, amongst Al-Qaeda, for example, individuals (including Muslims) who do not practice religion as they define it are deemed unbelievers who are worthy of being killed.

The binary ‘us versus them’ mentality is driven, in part, by the development of a new exclusivist identity, to the rejection of every other identity marker. According to Todd Helmus, “identification with the broader Muslim community plays a critical role in facilitating the concept of a collective grievance.”⁸⁴ Any perceived injustice or grievance against Muslims around the world is, therefore, considered a personal attack. For example, in 2010 extremist leader Anwar al-Awlaki issued a prominent

call to violent action against the US following purported drone strikes that killed women and children in Yemen, stating that he could not reconcile his American identity with his Muslim identity:

“I for one, was born in the US, I lived in the US for twenty-one years. America was my home... However, with the American invasion of Iraq, and continued US aggression against Muslims, I could not reconcile between living in the US and being a Muslim, and I eventually came to the conclusion that Jihad against America is binding upon myself, just as it is binding on every other able Muslim.”

This rhetoric can resonate strongly amongst individuals who experience disenfranchisement.

KEY TERM

Takfirism—the practice of calling that anyone who does not practice Islam, according to violent extremist definitions, is deemed an unbeliever and may be killed.

3. Narrative: Violence is Justified and Necessary to Foster Change

PPT IO Perhaps the most widely articulated deviant religious concept is the supposed centrality of combative *jihad* to Islamic practices. Broadly, *jihad* has many applications, usually understood in two ways: the ‘greater *jihad*’— to live a moral life serving God and mankind, and to struggle to submit to the will of God — and a ‘lesser *jihad*’ which can include combat, such as defensive war.

82. Randy Borum, “Psychological Vulnerabilities and Propensities for Involvement in Violent Extremism,” *Behavioral Science and the Law*, Volume 32 (2014): 286-305.

83. Jose Liht and Sarah Savage, “Preventing Violent Extremism through Value Complexity: Being Muslim Being British,” *Journal of Strategic Study*, Volume 6, Number 4, Article 3.

84. Todd Helmus, “Why and How Some People Become Terrorists,” in *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, ed. by Paul K. Davis and Kim Craigin, Rand, 2009.

However, despite what extremists claim, combative *jihad* has several strict rules and conditions that must exist before combat can be sanctioned. For example, ***jihad* can only be legitimized by the state, and cannot be undertaken by non-state actors, as well as requiring broad consensus from other Muslim state leaders.** Unlike mainstream scholars who believe that only a state ruler can declare *jihad*, extremists such as Abdullah Az-zam, a key mentor of Osama bin Laden, argue that any scholar or leader can declare combative *jihad* and then all Muslims must participate. This reasoning appears in several major fatwas encouraging violence against the West issued by Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda leader Ayman Zawahiri.⁸⁵ As a result, extremists argue that combative *jihad* is a central tenet of Islam. Moreover, they argue, violence in the form of *jihad* is perceived as a viable means to address grievances and to bring about socio-political change – even if means engaging in anti-state violence and/or sacrificing one’s life.⁸⁶

Facilitator’s note: It is worth noting that heads of state, religious scholars, and community leaders, and have issued denunciations of terrorism and have refuted extremist narratives that justify the use of violence to address their grievances. Prominent statements include a 2014 fatwa (religious edict) against ISIS issued by Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah,⁸⁷ “Refuting ISIS” written by Shaykh Al-Yaqoubi, the Amman Message, a statement calling for tolerance and denouncing takfirism issued by King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein of Jordan and signed by more than 200 religious scholars,⁸⁸ and Dr. Tahir ul-Qadri’s 500+ page fatwa against terrorism and suicide bombing.⁸⁹

KEY TERM

Jihad—The Arabic word “*jihad*” is often translated as “holy war,” but in a purely linguistic sense, the word “*jihad*” means struggling or striving. [The Arabic word for war is: “al-harb”]. In a religious sense, as described by the Qur’an and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (s), “*jihad*” has many meanings. It can refer to internal as well as external efforts to be a good Muslim or believer, as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam.



Discussion Questions



Play the video on the PowerPoint:

- Watch the video and reflect on the following questions: What ideological narratives are reflected in this video?
- How does this compare with Alex’s experience? Which ideologies/beliefs or values influenced her beliefs?

❖ 2.2d Political Grievances

Political grievances against a state often play a major role in radicalizing individuals. These grievances may be due to unpopular foreign policies, or economic, social, or cultural practices sanctioned by the state; weak infrastructure; limited rule of law; inefficient judicial structures; unequal resource distribution; limited political rights and civil liberties; and repression of oppositional groups. States’ failure to address these grievances, can eventually delegitimize a regime, which increases the likelihood that an oppositional group will use violence to resolve those grievances.⁹⁰ Moreover, political parties are most likely to use terrorism when the group has large-scale ambitions of regime change and the establishment of a new social order.⁹¹ This is particularly relevant for organiza-

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85. See for example, “*Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders World Islamic Front Statement*,” issued February 23, 1998, <http://fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm>.
86. Mitchell Silber, “Statement Before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee,” November 19, 2009.
87. “This is not the Path to Paradise, a Fatwa Response to ISIS,” *Bin Bayyah*, September 24, 2014, <http://binbayyah.net/english/2014/09/24/fatwa-response-to-isis/>
88. The Amman Message, <http://ammanmessage.com/>
89. Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul-Qadri, “Fatwa on Terrorism and Suicide Bombings” *Minhaj ul-Quran Publications*, 2011.
90. See for example, Sprinzak, Ehud, “Extreme Left Terrorism in a Democracy,” in Walter Reich, ed., *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1990.

tions like ISIS or Al-Qaeda that intend to subvert established regimes to build a new supposed “Islamic” state.

The following sections explore some of the extremist narratives that relate to political grievances:

1. Narrative: Repression and Human Rights Abuses

State repression is considered particularly powerful in mobilizing opposition groups. The state’s use of excessive violence against oppositional figures not only delegitimizes the state but also legitimizes the use of violence by activists. Furthermore, state repression can create and reinforce the notion of martyrdom,⁹² a popular theme amongst extremists. ISIS, for example, has drawn significant support from criticizing the brutal practices of repressive authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. One of the most commonly cited reason for joining armed opposition groups according to analyst Max Stahlberg from the Syrian Support Group, is the concept of the “the humanitarian jihad”— the need to respond to the horrific images of the conflict, atrocities committed by government forces, and the perceived lack of support from Western and Arab countries.

2. Narrative: Lack of Political Rights and Civil Liberties

Limited political rights and civil liberties – including a lack of political representation, perceptions of political discrimination and feelings of disenfranchisement – facilitate a sense of alienation and hopelessness, which may influence vulnerable individual’s participation in radical milieus. The lack of civil rights and civil liberties – com-

pounded with distrust of the government – is a particularly powerful narrative amongst vulnerable individuals.

3. Narrative: Corruption

Government corruption is a major source for political grievances and contributes significantly to the perceived illegitimacy of a regime. Allegations of corruption can stem from usurping power, embezzling state funds, or from serving the needs of foreign governments. Violent extremist groups often use corruption as a rallying point to advocate for violent regime change.

4. Narrative: Foreign Interventions

Foreign interventions such as drone strikes, and the presence of foreign military troops or bases are common political grievances. For example, the deployment of 10,000 US forces in Saudi Arabia during the 1991 Gulf War was heavily criticized by Osama bin Laden. Following the twin bombings of the American Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, an organization with ties to Osama bin Laden issued a communiqué warning that additional attacks would occur unless US and Western forces withdrew from Muslim countries.⁹⁴ Effective recruiters draw on these global themes, and then make them relevant at the individual level by appealing to personal senses of injustice, relative deprivation, or collective humiliation.

The perception of foreign occupation may also have a correlation with incidents of terrorism. For example, in a study of suicide campaigns from 1980 to 2001, Pape found that suicide bombers are particularly likely to target democracies that are perceived to be foreign occupiers.⁹⁵

91. In her chapter, “The Root Causes of Terrorism,” Darcy M.E. Noricks, identifies research conducted by Leonard Weinberg, Ami Pedahzur, and Arie Perlinger as instrumental works in the field. See Darcy M.E. Noricks, “The Root Causes of Terrorism,” in *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, page 21.

92. Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, & the State*, Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

93. Todd Helmus, “Why and How Some People Become Terrorists,” in *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, ed. by Paul K. Davis and Kim Craigin, Rand, 2009.

94. John Kifner, “Bombings in East Africa: The Suspect; Wealthy Force Behind Murky Militant Group,” *The New York Times*, August 14, 1998 <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/08/14/world/bombings-in-east-africa-the-suspect-wealthy-force-behind-murky-militant-group.html>.

95. Pape, Robert A., “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97 (August 2003): 343–361.



Discussion Questions

- How do political factors overlap with psychological and sociological factors? (Potential answers include: disenfranchisement or perceptions of infringements on political rights and civil liberties can fuel hopelessness and a sense of social alienation, as well as individual and collective humiliation).
- How do political grievances overlap with ideological beliefs?
- Can you think of ways that extremists use political events to have religious significance?

❖ 2.2e Economic Factors

The relationship between economic factors—such as poverty, unemployment and relative deprivation—and propensity to support violent extremism is arguably one of the most contested issues in the field. Some studies that rely on national survey data⁹⁶ suggest that unemployment or low-income levels do not necessarily lead one to become a terrorist. Other studies⁹⁷ indicate that lack of gainful employment and other poverty indicators have been identified in some regions as a driving factor of recruitment and radicalization. For example, in Somalia, Mali, Syria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, violent extremists target their recruitment efforts in poor communities, by providing social welfare assistance, employment, cash handouts, and scholarships to impoverished individuals to gain support.⁹⁸ Similarly, Turkish foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria cite financial incentives such as daily stipends of \$150 per day for fighting with groups like ISIS.⁹⁹ In one study of Al Shabab fighters, over half of the respondents indicated that economic considerations played a major role

in their decision to join.¹⁰⁰ Half reported being unemployed at the time they joined the group, while the other half was largely in low-wage jobs. It is noteworthy that respondents who cited economic reasons for joining Al Shabab were apt to view the organization as a reliable employer. It is also worth noting that disincentives play a critical role in individual's decisions to provide material support to VEOs. In Swat, the Pakistani Taliban gave some families a choice: they could pay an enormous financial tax, or surrender their child to the movement.

Feelings of relative deprivation, the discrepancy between what an individual believes they are entitled to, and what they obtain or experience as their circumstances permit it, are another prominent push factor of violent extremism because it can fuel frustration and aggression.¹⁰¹ Feelings of relative deprivation can stem from perceived economic inequalities, discrepancies of national resource allocation, or even political disenfranchisement. Violent extremist organizations often reinforce relative deprivation, by drawing on victimization narratives, which posit that Muslims are discriminated against by the broader society, and as such receive fewer resources.

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96. Alan Krueger, and Jitka Maleckova, "Education, Poverty, Political Violence and Terrorism is there a Causal Connection," *NBER Working Paper Series*.
97. Atle Mesøy, "Poverty and radicalisation into violent extremism: A causal link?" *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre*, 2013.
98. See for example, Hedieh Mirahmadi, Mehreen Farooq, and Waleed Ziad, "Afghanistan 2014 and Beyond: The Role of Civil Society in Peacebuilding and Countering Violent Extremism," *WORDE Report*, February 2014 and Hedieh Mirahmadi, Mehreen Farooq, and Waleed Ziad, "A Community Based Approach to Countering Radicalization" *WORDE Report*, January 2011.
99. Ceylan Yeginsu, "ISIS Draws a Steady Stream of Recruits from Turkey," *New York Times*, September 15, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/16/world/europe/turkey-is-a-steady-source-of-isis-recruits.html?_r=0
100. Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile, "Radicalisation and Al-Shabaab recruitment in Somalia," *Institute for Security Studies*, 2014.
101. Omer Taspinar, "Fighting Radicalism, Not Terrorism: Root Causes of an International Actor Redefined," *SAIS Review*, Vol. 29, Issue number 2, (Summer-Fall 2009).

It is important to note that relative deprivation has been identified as significant risk factor of collective violence even when individuals are not personally deprived but act on behalf of a group they perceive to be deprived.¹⁰² As a result, relative deprivation can play a role in radicalizing individuals, regardless of their own socio-economic stature.

KEY TERM

Relative Deprivation—the discrepancy between what an individual believes they are entitled to, and what they obtain or experience as their circumstances permit it.



Discussion Questions

- Were there any economic risk factors present in Alex's story?
- If so, which ones and how did they make her more vulnerable?

SPOTLIGHT

The Science of Scarcity: Several studies show that poverty can impair cognitive abilities and even lead to poor decision making. In an article from Harvard Magazine, behavioral economist, Sendhil Mullainathan asserts that scarcity (whether financial, lack of social networks, time or bandwidth) can fuel impulsive behavior and poor decision-making. "...just as food had possessed the minds of the starving volunteers in Minnesota, scarcity steals mental capacity wherever it occurs—from the hungry, to the lonely, to the time-strapped, to the poor." In short, poverty can affect someone's ability to make sound decisions and can even contribute to destructive behaviors, especially if an extremist group is promising financial incentives that help change an individual's economic situation.

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102. Tinka Veldhuis & Jørgen Staun, "Islamist Radicalisation: A Root Cause Model", *Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael*, 2009.
 103. Brady Dennis, "Poverty Strains Cognitive Abilities, Opening Door for Bad Decision-Making, New Study Finds," *Washington Post*, August 29, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/poverty-strains-cognitive-abilities-opening-door-for-bad-decision-making-new-study-finds/2013/08/29/89990288-102b-11e3-8cdd-bcdc09410972_story.html.
 104. Cara Feinberg, "The Science of Scarcity: A Behavioral Economist's Fresh Perspective on Poverty," *Harvard Magazine*, May-June 2015, <http://harvardmagazine.com/2015/05/the-science-of-scarcity>.
 105. *ibid.*

Identifying Potential Risk

❖ 2.3 Assessing Potential Risk Factors

Having explored potential risk factors, we will now reflect on Alex's story and revisit the questions you addressed in handout 1 that we did in the beginning of the module.



Discussion Questions

- What do you think are the relevant factors that contributed to Alex's engagement with violent extremists online? What factors might have made her vulnerable? *Facilitators note: allow participants to share responses, and then recap the following:*

Sociological: Alex suffered from loneliness and a lack of a sense of belonging. Without any opportunities to develop healthy relationships in-person, she resorted to cultivating her social network online. The online friends she associated with harbored extremist views, and influenced her worldview.

Psychological: the individuals she interacted with manipulated her emotions, shared highs and lows and reassured her that she would "be loved." Sleep deprivation and anxiety, leading to cognitive impairment, may have also made her more vulnerable.

Political: she sought explanations in order to understand the complex political dynamics between the U.S. and Syria. She was affected by stories of civilians — in particular children — dying in the conflict.

Ideological: she came to accept bifurcated world views and deviant interpretations of Islam.

Economic: she was not working or able to support herself financially.

PPT 12

- In Alex's case, what potential risk factors may have overlapped and had a cumulative effect?
- Throughout their various stages of communication with the extremist recruiter, when could have law enforcement and community leaders intervened and how?

Since the article was published, Alex's grandmother forbade her to contact her recruiter or any of her new friends, and she forced Alex to de-active her social media accounts. Despite this, Alex continues to contact her 'friends' under new usernames. According to her recent Tweets, she is still desperately searching for guidance and support.

Alex's grandmother intervened by confronting the recruiter, and forbidding Alex from speaking with him again. She also sought to limit Alex's access to Skype and her social media accounts.

- What issues may have prevented the grandmother from recognizing that Alex was radicalizing?

Continued on next page



Discussion Questions, continued

- What barriers may the grandmother have faced in intervening?
- What other actions could Alex’s grandmother taken to help her? (Possible answers include: providing her counseling; providing her access to religious scholars to explain why ISIS’ agenda is destructive and dangerous; enrolling her in activities to develop a positive social network such as an arts/crafts club, or a sports team).
- What would you do to help Alex now?
- Reflect on the handout from the beginning of the module. How did your answers change? What did you notice this time that you didn’t address before?

❖ 2.4 Group Activity: Case Studies

In pairs or in groups, analyze the following case studies. For each case study, answer the following questions:

PPT 13

- Review WORDE’s *Potential Risk Factors of Radicalization Matrix*®. What factors (sociological motivators; psychological conditions; ideology/belief/values; political grievances; and economic factors) affected each individual?
- Imagine this individual is part of your community. What type of interventions would you recommend? Who would you involve and why? (e.g. community leaders, imams, psychiatrists, vocational trainers, social workers, counselors, etc.)

Zachary Chesser

PPT 14 In October 2010 he pled guilty to three federal felony charges: communicating threats against the creators of South Park for an episode that portrayed the Prophet Muhammad dressed in a bear costume. He was charged with inciting violence against law enforcement and attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization.

- In high school Chesser played football, was a member of the crew team, and was enrolled in the Gifted and Talented program.

- Despite his academic achievements and involvement in school activities, his classmates remembered him as a “loner” who frequently drew pictures of satanic figures in his notebooks.
- Following high school he converted to Islam and began visiting extremist cleric’s blogs and websites featuring content of the extremist American-born cleric, Anwar al-Awlaki.
- According to his family, soon after graduation, he quit his job at a Blockbuster video store because “he objected to working at a place that rented videos featuring naked women.” His parents also described an increasingly hostile home environment in which Chesser would institute strict rules to enforce what he believed to be proper Islamic traditions. By August 2008, he had moved out of his mother’s house in Virginia because, according to his father, “his Moms relationship with her live-in partner . . . violated his Islamic beliefs.”¹⁰⁶
- He developed his own extremist blog and began posting views that supported terrorist groups.
- He posted threatening videos on YouTube; created his own website advocating for the terrorist organization, Al Shabab; maintained an extremist Twitter feed; and, continued posting frequently on blogs linked to terrorists.

106. “Zachary Chesser: A Case Study in Online Islamist Radicalization and its Meaning for the Threat of Homegrown Terrorism,” A report by minority and majority staff of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, February 2012.

- He attempted to travel abroad to join Al Shabab, but was barred. Shortly after the Uganda World Cup Semi-final bombings in July 2010, he contacted the FBI claiming that he no longer wanted to support the extremist movement.

Shannon Maureen Conley

PPT 15 In 2013, Shannon was questioned by the FBI, who were contacted by a local church for fear she might be plotting an attack against them. When questioned about her objectives, she said she was planning to marry a militant waging jihad abroad. At 19 years of age, she was charged for providing material support for al-Qaeda and affiliates, including ISIS:

- She grew up in Colorado and was a certified nurse's aide.
- She had converted to Islam and began watching lectures by the extremist American-born cleric, Anwar al-Awlaki, and videos by other violent extremists.
- She attended Ralston Valley and Arvada West high schools, had received military training in a Texas camp run by the U.S. Army Explorers and developed a close relationship with an avowed terrorist who had invited her to join the jihad.
- After Conley was caught engaging in suspicious behavior outside a church, the FBI sought to intervene – they told her that it was illegal to travel abroad to join a militant organization. They also tried urging her instead to support Muslims through humanitarian efforts, however she told them that this was not an option.
- The FBI reported that Conley felt that jihad was the only answer to correct the wrongs against the Muslim world.
- Agents encouraged Conley's parents to get her to meet with elders at her mosque to find more moderate options. Her parents were apparently unaware of her extremism, authorities said.

Troy Kastigar & Douglas McAuthur McCain

PPT 16 Both traveled abroad to join terrorist organizations—Troy traveled to Kenya to join Al Shabab and was killed in 2009; Douglas traveled to Syria to join ISIS and was the first American killed in Syria in 2014:

- The two were friends who grew up in Minnesota – they played basketball together, and wrote freewheeling raps in each other's bedrooms – over the years they walked parallel paths to trouble, never graduating from high school and racking up arrests.
- They converted to Islam around the same time and both maintained contact with numerous people associated with terrorism, including one man from Minnesota who was killed while fighting in Somalia.
- Both had difficulties finding stable employment. Troy began drinking, smoking marijuana and failing classes in high school. He dropped out of high school, and got his equivalency diploma. A series of arrests compounded his troubles finding work and he resorted to odd jobs - working at a mortgage office and cutting hair from time to time.
- Similarly, Douglas was arrested several times, for driving violations, theft and a marijuana charge. In 2009, he moved to San Diego, where he had relatives and worked at a Somali restaurant. He enrolled at San Diego City College. Four years later, his family was shocked at his decision to join ISIS and there is still some uncertainty as to what motivated him to join.
- In 2008, Mr. Kastigar told his mother that he was going to Kenya to study the Qur'an. He bought a one-way ticket and left that November. He spoke with his mother five times, telling her that he was eating well and helping people. His mother said he had never been motivated by hate, but by a belief that somehow he could be a hero.

❖ 2.5 Community-Led Prevention and Intervention of Violent Extremism

Understanding potential risk factors of radicalization and how they might contribute to a person's vulnerability and susceptibility to violent extremism is the first step in protecting our communities. **Remember vulnerability does NOT indicate a propensity for violence.** The goal is to recognize the vulnerability and provide the requisite help to avoid mobilization to violent or criminal action.

Sample Questions to Assess the Risk of Vulnerable Individuals:

PPT 17

- Is he/she constantly feeling a sense of prolonged anger and resentment against family and/or peers? Has she/he verbalized (online or in person) any intent to become violent, or to hurt themselves or others?
- Does he/she appear to be withdrawn, isolated, and/or

excluded from social situations and has that changed recently?

- Has he/she made repeated references to the ideological issues or political grievances we discussed previously? Is he/she become more combative verbally in defense of those beliefs and have those beliefs changed from before?
- Is he/she suddenly changing his/her circle of friends?
- Is he/she displaying behavior changes such as becoming easily startled or more secretive? Have they been hiding things from family, friends?



Discussion Questions

- Who intervened in Alex's story?
- What were some of the warning signs that her family may have identified? (Possible answers include: appearing withdrawn and isolated; a sudden change in her circle of friends; secretive behaviors).



SPOTLIGHT

Community Perceptions Matter! The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted for the evaluation of WORDE's programs in Montgomery County, Maryland, sought to assess community awareness of potential risk factors of radicalization and the community's natural inclinations in response to these factors. The survey sought to measure what local community members regard as the warning signs of radicalization. Community members identified the following as main themes¹⁰⁷ or potential risk factors related to someone becoming a violent extremist:

■ Sociological:

- Lack of parental involvement
- Lack of family to notice behavior

■ Psychological:

- Isolation
 - Withdrawn from friends and family
 - Lack of "cultural adjustment" to U.S.
 - Social exclusion by peers
- Loneliness
- Anger
- Identity Needs
 - To feel a part of something larger than themselves
 - Looking for a sense of purpose in life

■ Ideologies/Beliefs/Values:

- Sympathizing with and admiring extremists
 - Justifying/approving acts of violence
 - Victim blaming
 - Threats of violence
 - Stating thoughts of joining a violent extremist group
 - Involvement with individuals who are angry and talking about committing violence

- Researching how to commit acts of violence
- Attempting to obtain means of violence
- Taking an interest in firearms

■ Political:

- Experiencing/experienced injustice
- Referring to themselves as "victims" of a certain system or country
- Vehement Bias:
 - Making comments that are out of character, biased against a particular group
 - Expressions of hate or criticism towards another
 - Making statements, even in jest, recommending violence against specific groups

■ Economic:

- Experiencing poverty
- Feeling deprived

While these themes represent perceptions and lay-theories of community members, they can provide insight into how a community understands risk factors of violent extremism and what will ultimately help inform community-led prevention programs. Talking with various law enforcement officials, faith leaders, violence prevention specialists, teachers, social service providers and community members about how they perceive specific risk factors and their natural inclinations towards prevention will provide valuable input into a community led strategy. It is important that common perceptions and theories are addressed and sometimes corrected if inaccurate. This can help root community-led prevention programs within local realities and create the necessary buy-in and ownership around the strategies to address violent extremism.

107. Other factors were discussed, however, these issues were the most prevalence amongst participants.

Taking Action: What's Next?

Often someone's radicalization to violence is unique, gradual and involves changes that friends, family, and community members observe before there is a mobilization to violence. As in Alex's case, intervention by close

family or friends can slow, stop, reverse, and/or prevent someone from becoming mobilized to violence. Now that Module 2 has provided a framework for understanding potential risk factors that fuel radicalization, Module 3 will focus on what can be done at the community level to address these concerns.

SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS LEARNED

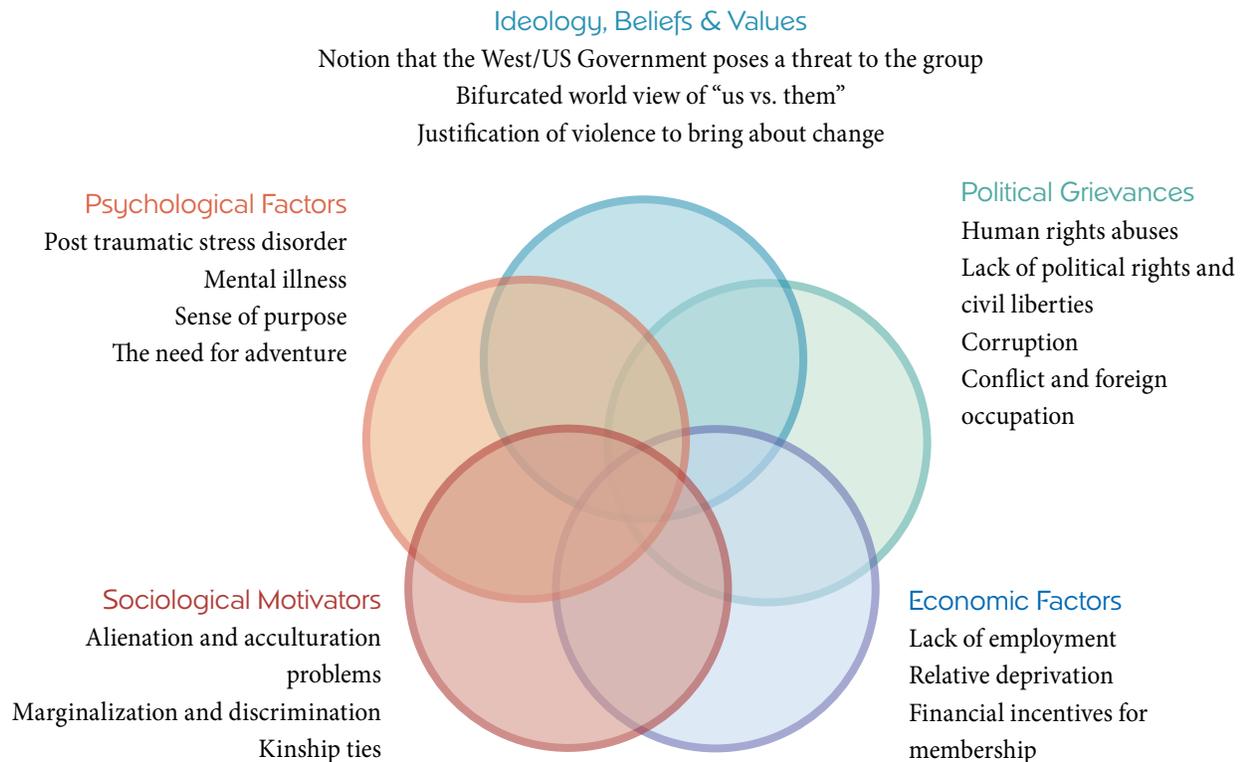
- There are multiple, non-linear pathways to radicalization. There is no one-size-fits-all model or terrorist profile that can be used to anticipate who will become recruited to a violent extremist organization.
- WORDE's Potential Risk Factors of Radicalization Matrix illustrates five major groupings of potential risk factors that might influence radicalization: sociological motivators; psychological conditions; ideology/belief/values; political grievances; and economic factors. Within each broad category, there are several push and pull factors that can have an independent or overlapping/cumulative impact.
- Extremists often "broadcast intent" on social media or through personal interactions so one should not ignore or disregard expressions of violent intent.
- It is important to note that there is no causal link between any one risk factor and becoming a terrorist. These potential risk factors establish a framework from which we can begin to understand an individual's vulnerability to violent extremism.
- The matrix cannot be used to predict who will become radicalized based on the presence of one or more risk factors. However, it can guide help you create CVE specific programming and interventions, along with evaluating the efficacy of a program that seeks to reduce various risk factors in a given community.
- Risk factors are contextual, some are more relevant to certain communities and not all have to be present for radicalization to take place.
- The propensity to join an extremist group often stems from a willingness to accept new beliefs and values. One or more risk factors can trigger this willingness and make one more vulnerability to extremist ideologies.
- Community awareness of potential risk factors of radicalization and being able to identify warning signs are important steps towards prevention of violent extremism.

Reflections on the Alex Case Study

After reading, the New York Times article, “ISIS and the Lonely American,” consider the following questions:

1. What surprised you about Alex’s story? Why?
2. Did this article challenge your assumptions of individuals who may be vulnerable to violent extremism?
3. What factors contributed to Alex’s engagement with her Twitter friends? What made her vulnerable to violent extremist recruiters?

Five Potential Risk Factors that Might Influence Radicalization



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Development Assets

Developmental assets are skills, experiences, relationships and behaviors that help children grow into healthy, caring and responsible adults.

External and internal assets are vital for the healthy development of young adults (ages 12-18). Below is a list of major assets, adapted from the Search Institute's¹⁰⁸ framework of 40 Developmental Assets:

EXTERNAL ASSETS

- Support from trusted adults and family members
- Healthy communication with friends and family
- Safety
- Nurturing social network
- Positive role models
- Positive peer influence
- Constructive activities

INTERNAL ASSETS

- Achievement motivation
- Positive emotional and social competencies
- Positive self esteem
- Having a sense of purpose in life
- Positive view of the future



In order to develop these skills, young adults require support from trusted, nurturing adults, such as family, teachers and community members.

According to the Search Institute, the more Developmental Assets young people acquire, they will be better equipped to succeed in school, in their professional lives, and in their communities.

However, a lack of developmental assets can make an individual — especially youth — more vulnerable to violent extremism or other destructive behaviors.

In addition to cultivating developmental assets, young adults require protective resources — the social and psychosocial factors that can stop, delay, or diminish negative outcomes.

Protective resources, often in the form of healthy relationships, promote social wellbeing and can be crucial to preventing at-risk individuals from becoming vulnerable to recruitment by terrorist organizations.

108. <http://www.search-institute.org/research/developmental-assets>

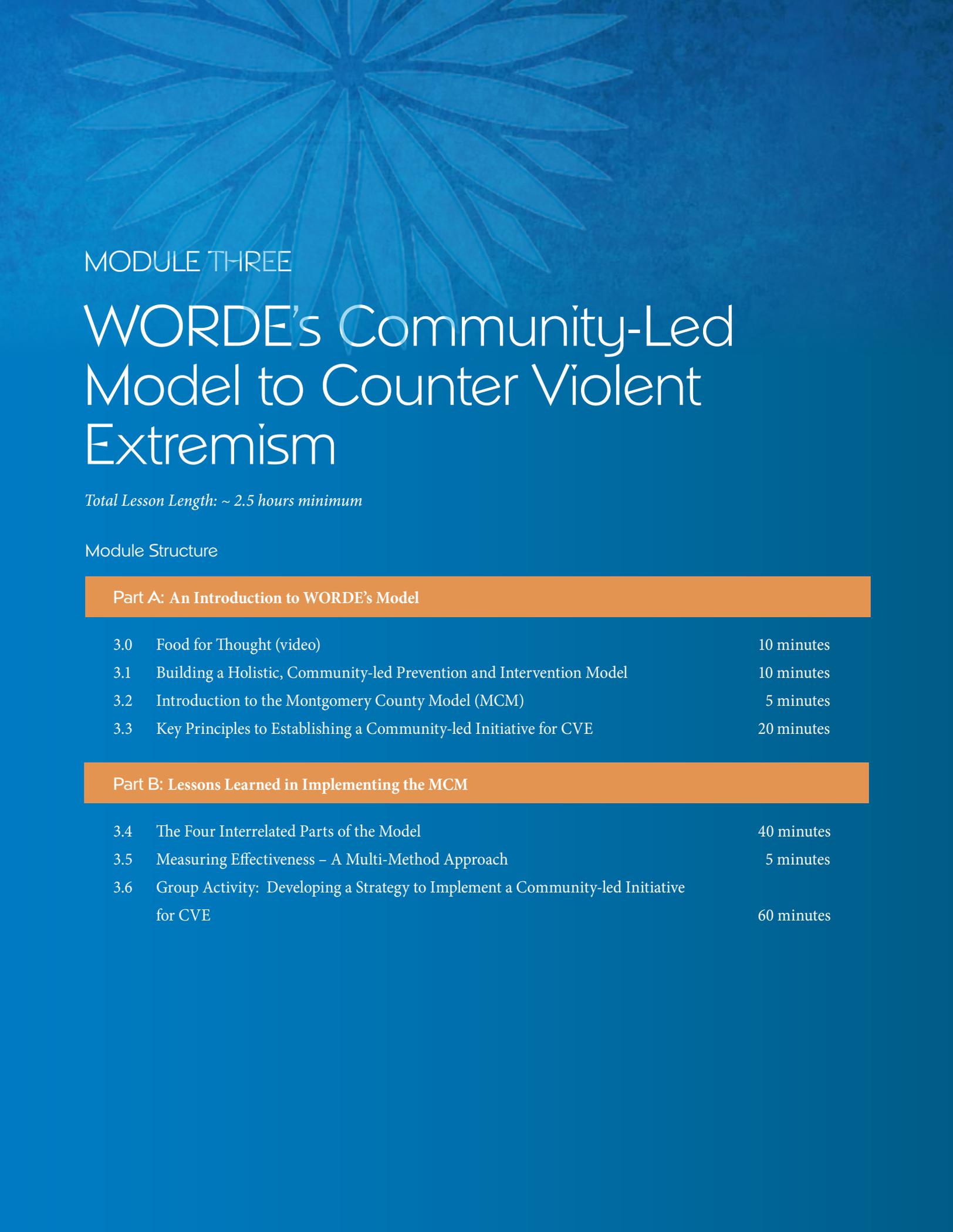
Common Terminology

- **Radicalization:** The process by which individuals believe that non-state violence is a valid means to address their grievances and/or foster social and political change.
- **Risk factors:** WORDE has identified five types of factors that have a potential to increase one's vulnerability and susceptibility towards radicalization. They include sociological motivators; psychological conditions; ideology/belief/values; political grievances; and economic factors.
- **Jihad:** The Arabic word "jihad" is often translated as "holy war," but in a purely linguistic sense, the word "jihad" means struggling or striving. [The Arabic word for war is: "al-harb." In a religious sense, as described by the Quran and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (s), "jihad" has many meanings. It can refer to internal as well as external efforts to be a good Muslims or believer, as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam.
- **Push factors:** The negative social, cultural and political features of one's societal environment that aid in "pushing" vulnerable individuals onto the path of violent extremism.
- **Pull factors:** The characteristics and benefits of an extremist organization that "pull" vulnerable individuals to join.
- **Developmental assets**— particular factors that help children grow into healthy, caring and responsible adults.
- **Protective resources**—are social and psychosocial factors that can stop, delay, or diminish negative outcomes.
- **Takfirism:** The belief that someone who does not practice Islam, as violent extremists define it, is deemed an unbeliever and may be killed.
- **Relative deprivation:** The discrepancy between what an individual believes they are entitled to, and what they obtain or experience as their circumstances permit it.
- **Lone Wolf Terrorism:** Terrorists who undergo radicalization largely by themselves as opposed to a group setting. Lone wolf terrorists are more likely to broadcasting their intent before committing acts of violence.

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MODULE THREE

WORDE's Community-Led Model to Counter Violent Extremism

Total Lesson Length: ~ 2.5 hours minimum

Module Structure

Part A: An Introduction to WORDE's Model

3.0	Food for Thought (video)	10 minutes
3.1	Building a Holistic, Community-led Prevention and Intervention Model	10 minutes
3.2	Introduction to the Montgomery County Model (MCM)	5 minutes
3.3	Key Principles to Establishing a Community-led Initiative for CVE	20 minutes

Part B: Lessons Learned in Implementing the MCM

3.4	The Four Interrelated Parts of the Model	40 minutes
3.5	Measuring Effectiveness – A Multi-Method Approach	5 minutes
3.6	Group Activity: Developing a Strategy to Implement a Community-led Initiative for CVE	60 minutes

Module Introduction: Module 2 explored potential risk factors of radicalization and highlighted the need for community-led approaches for the prevention and intervention of violence. Module 3 will provide an overview of the “Montgomery County Model” (MCM) — WORDE’s community-led initiative to promote social cohesion and public safety, with a core focus on preventing violent extremism through engagement, education, building connections and targeted interventions. Adaptable to the needs of each locality, the model (discussed in detail throughout this module), can also address a wide range of issues including encouraging disaster preparedness and responding to acts of hate or identity based violence. Module 3 will provide best practices and recommendations for how communities can incorporate aspects of this model in their respective jurisdictions.

Target Audience: Key public and private stakeholders that would implement CVE programing in partnership, e.g. law enforcement officers, public officials (e.g. county executives, US attorney generals, school board members, etc.), faith community leaders.

Module Learning Objectives: Upon completing Module 3, participants will be empowered to:

- Articulate the components of a community-led, holistic, prevention and intervention model
- Explore the MCM and describe its key facets
- Understand WORDE’s four-part model for the prevention and intervention of violent extremism
- Complete a learning exercise that includes drafting a strategic plan to implement a community-led initiative for CVE, tailored to their local jurisdiction

The Montgomery County Model (MCM) is a community-led initiative to promote social cohesion and public safety, with a core focus on preventing violent extremism through engagement, education, building connections and targeted interventions. By the time of this publication, the MCM has been renamed for more general applicability to the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) model.



An Introduction to WORDE's Model

❖ 3.0 Food for Thought

Facilitators' Note—At the beginning of the lesson, establish a baseline with participants to assess their familiarity with community-led initiatives:



Discussion Question

- This module focuses on a community-led initiative to promote social cohesion and public safety. Is everyone here familiar with what a community-led initiative is? Can someone give us a definition or provide an example of something they've seen in their jurisdiction?

Definition of a Community-led Initiative (CLI)

PPT 1 For the purposes of this lesson, a community-led initiative helps ensure government policies and practices are responsive to local realities, while allowing the communities to benefit by gaining access to public resources, technical training, and decision-making processes to scale up and sustain their collaborative initiatives.

Food for Thought

PPT 2 *Using an interactive, multi-media format, we will begin each module with at least one audio-visual or statistic (“food for thought”) to stimulate discussion.*

Play the video on the PowerPoint: “Inside Effort to Stop Homegrown Terrorism”



Discussion Question

- In this video, WORDE, a non-governmental organization took the lead in empowering public officials and community members with resources to prevent violent extremism. In what ways do you think a community-led approach may be beneficial or different from a government-led initiative?

Who is WORDE?

PPT 3 The World Organization for Resource Development and Education (WORDE) is a nonprofit, educational organization whose mission is to enhance communication and understanding between diverse communities to mitigate social and political conflict. WORDE provides groundbreaking research and programming in the CVE field both within the U.S. and abroad.

Our public policy research, programming, and training helps local communities understand the important distinctions between the mainstream Muslim community and extremists who manipulate the tenets of Islam for their own destructive purposes. In 2010, WORDE authored a seminal community-centered paper to guide policymaking on preventing homegrown violent extremism. In 2011, WORDE developed the International Cultural Center (ICC) to engage Montgomery County residents in programs that promote social cohesion based on mutual respect and harmonious coexistence.

❖ 3.1 Building a Holistic, Community-led Prevention and Intervention Model

Module 2 illustrated how homegrown violent extremism (HVE) remains a major national security threat. In order to address this threat adequately, many argue that prevention is the only long-term, sustainable solution.¹⁰⁹ While law enforcement efforts to thwart attacks are tremendously important and effective, these efforts do not have the potential to decrease the number of people who are vulnerable to becoming radicalized.

Prevention programs that **build awareness** of the potential risk factors of radicalization and provide **direct services** to vulnerable individuals are essential to reducing the risk of violence,¹¹⁰ particularly in the pre-criminal and pre-mobilization space—as noted in the White House’ *Strategic Implementation Plan* and several National Security Strategy documents.¹¹¹ The infrastructure for these types of programs should be built at the community level and requires strong collaboration between local community leaders, law enforcement, social service providers, schools, faith groups and other relevant stakeholders. Additionally, because the process of radicalization is not linear, but complex, and often recognized by those closest to at-risk individuals, community-based programs are essential for conducting interventions for

PPT 4

SPOTLIGHT

Community-based Interventions Work! In the Focus Group Discussions (FGD)¹¹² for this project, several participants noted that community members—particularly who have direct access to vulnerable individuals such as peers, teachers, coaches, religious leaders, family and friends—seem well-suited to *identify* vulnerable individuals. Consequently, such peers might also be well-suited to referring vulnerable individuals to service providers who can intervene.

vulnerable individuals *before* they become violent.

Finally, the most successful community-led strategies are often holistic and integrated, focused not only on countering violent extremism, but on addressing an array of public safety issues and cultivating community resilience and social cohesion. Examples of public safety concerns that can be addressed in your community-led initiative include: hate crimes, online safety mechanisms, cyber bullying, and emergency preparedness for faith-based organizations.

Effective community-led initiatives require investment from a wide network of stakeholders who are committed to building relationships of trust and can serve as access points for the rest of the community. This module will explore this in the context of the Montgomery County model, a successful example of a holistic, community-based prevention program.

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109. Fathali M. Moghaddam, “The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration,” *American Psychologist*, Vol. 60, No. 2: (161-169), 2005.
 110. Alejandro Beutel, “Partnering with Muslim Americans to Fight Extremist Violent Crime: A Community Perspective” in *Preventing Ideological Violence: Communities, Police, and Case Studies of Success*, edited by Daniel Silk, Basia Spalek, and Mary O’Rawe, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
 111. US National Security Strategy, 2010, page 18, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf
 112. In 2014, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) launched a two-year evaluation of the efficacy of WORDE’s Montgomery County Model, a community-led initiative spearheaded by WORDE, the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) and the Montgomery County Executive’s Office of Community Partnerships, to improve public safety and foster social cohesion amongst diverse county residents. The evaluation, conducted by the University of Massachusetts-Lowell and the University of Nevada, Reno, assessed community-based participation in CVE programs, community awareness of risk factors of radicalization and the community’s natural inclinations in response to these factors. The evaluation utilized surveys and focus group discussions with a wide array of respondents, including Montgomery County Police Officers, gang/violence prevention specialists, local representatives of faith-based organizations, participants of WORDE programming and other community members who had not been previously involved with WORDE’s model.



Discussion Question

How to Cultivate Community Partners?

- Identifying effective partners often takes time, creativity and a commitment to shared values. Think back to Module 1 and list three strategies for conducting community outreach and engagement with Muslim communities. How do you identify, engage and cultivate the right community partners?
- Describe your experience with community-led initiatives. What has worked and/or not worked?

❖ 3.2 Introduction to the Montgomery County Model

The Montgomery County Model (MCM) is an initiative developed by WORDE, in partnership with the Montgomery County Police Department and the Montgomery County Executive’s Office of Community Partnerships, to promote social cohesion and public safety. In furtherance of President Obama’s *National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism* in the US, the MCM has a core focus on generating public awareness about the potential risk factors of violent extremism, and empowering the appropriate figures to intervene with vulnerable individuals before they choose a path of violence.

The MCM is designed to be inclusive and collaborative—addressing the full spectrum of public safety threats, including the threat of homegrown violent extremism, through multiple stakeholder engagement that doesn’t stigmatize any one particular community. **Within the first three years (2013-2016) of the program’s inception, more than 4274 county residents from more than 300 faith congregations and social service agencies have participated in collaborative programming.**

Many facets of the model have shaped the White House’s pilot cities program, which seek to develop frameworks for prevention in major US cities, the first being Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Boston.¹¹³

Senior US government officials have commended WORDE for its leadership in the field and have encouraged expansion of the model to other jurisdictions across the country.

PPT 5

“The progress of the Montgomery County effort will help guide federal focus in a number of key regions nationally, and will allow us to leverage ongoing, albeit nascent efforts in many cities and make substantial investments of time and effort in a few critical places. I hope that the success of the Montgomery County model will spur action in other cities in the DC metro area as well as in nearby regions.” – George Selim, Director for the Office of Community Partnerships at the Department of Homeland Security, formerly the Director of Community Partnerships on the White House National Security Staff¹¹⁴



WORDE President, Dr. Hedieh Mirahmadi and the Montgomery County Faith Community Working Group and Montgomery County Police meet with White House Officials.

113. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/18/fact-sheet-white-house-summit-countering-violent-extremism>

114. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/other/selim-prepared-remarks-20131113.pdf>

SPOTLIGHT

PPT 6

MCM's Context

Overview of Montgomery County:^{115,116}

- Montgomery County's population is 1.02 million — home to a number of diverse ethnic and religious groups.
- With a population increase of 11.3% from 2000 to 2010, Montgomery County is one of the fastest growing minority-majority counties in America.
- A larger portion than ever before (32%) of Montgomery Co. residents are foreign-born.
- 36% of residents, above the age of five, speak a foreign language at home.
- Median age is 37
- Median income is \$94,365 (twelfth highest in the nation)

❖ 3.3 Key Principles to Establishing a Community-Led Initiative for CVE

The MCM's community-led initiative is comprised of an array of diverse stakeholders and executed through the Faith Community Working Group (FCWG), which is an official body within the Montgomery County Executive's Office of Community Partnerships. WORDE is actively involved in the management and administration of the FCWG and its programming. Leaders from the non-governmental sector set the agenda of the FCWG's annual programming and many diverse faith communities serves as hosts for its range of activities.

The FCWG increases collaboration between the faith community and county government on issues ranging from disaster preparedness and promoting public safety

PPT 7

Lessons Learned from the Lead Community Anchor

WORDE staff have identified several lessons learned and recommendations for replicating multi-stakeholder engagements for CVE:

- The lead anchor should have the capacity to engage multiple stakeholders at the governmental and non-governmental levels. Ideally, they should be experienced in effectively translating community's needs for policymakers and vice-versa, to gain public support for the initiative. Consider working with a 'think-tank' or an academic institution that may have this capacity.
- Partner with an organization that has significant prior experience engaging with faith-based communities.
- Mobilizing stakeholders, event planning and maintaining communications require time and resources. Encourage the lead anchor to apply for funding for programming support from multiple sources.

to supporting positive social integration. The partnership revolutionizes community policing by allowing the engagement to be community-driven and by fostering relationships amongst the diverse communities with one another — not just with the government.

One FGD participant noted that there is an interfaith "momentum" in Montgomery County. Utilizing the FCWG as a vehicle to execute our community-led partnership worked well in Montgomery County, where the County Executive has an interfaith community liaison and the faith community has been active in social issues. However, other jurisdictions may be interested in establishing a similar community-led initiative from a non-faith based angle.

115. "Montgomery County, MD," *Census Quick Facts*, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/24/24031.html> Accessed August 25, 2015

116. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/wp/2013/12/12/the-d-c-suburbs-dominate-the-list-of-wealthiest-u-s-counties/>



Discussion Questions

In Montgomery County, WORDE is the lead non-governmental organization involved in the management and administration of the FCWG and its programming. In this capacity, WORDE maintains email databases and communication amongst thousands of stakeholders, convenes stakeholders to address urgent issues affecting the county, identifies subject matter expertise for events, provides the ICC as a facility to host meetings and events, and provides logistical support for events we organize or co-sponsor.

- Which non-governmental organization in your jurisdiction would be interested and capable in leading the development of the community-led initiative?
- What obstacles if any may exist to engaging such organizations to lead this effort?

Once you identify organizations and leaders that you feel confident will be good strategic partners, you may be faced with the reality that they lack the resources or institutional capacity to help build the program and may not have the subject matter expertise to tackle extremism. Therefore it is essential to assist them with the requisite training and resources to develop local programs that would resonate with your society. The funding and expertise for such programs can come from both public and private sources and hopefully from in-kind donations of services as well.

- What types of funding opportunities might be available in your jurisdiction that can help build an organization's capacity to carryout administrative/management responsibilities?
- What local experts and/or academics do you have in your jurisdiction that can help with training on violent extremism and other public safety threats? *Prompt:* Are there any counter-terrorism, gang-prevention, or crisis intervention experts you could involve?

The Faith Community Working Group (FCWG) seeks to increase collaboration amongst the faith community stakeholders themselves and with county

government agencies, on issues ranging from disaster preparedness and promoting public safety to supporting positive social integration.

A cornerstone of the Montgomery County Model has been bringing diverse communities together to collaborate on a shared vision, with a single entity, WORDE, providing the central infrastructure as the Backbone Organization that anchored the community-led engagement.

It is important to note that cross-cultural collaboration is not always a smooth process and social science research strongly suggests that merely bringing different groups together, who are likely to view the other groups as “not like us,” stands the risk of increasing intergroup alienation. To bridge the intergroup divide successfully in ways that tend to create lasting change, decades of research in positive social integration theory have demonstrated that several conditions should be met. The Montgomery County Model was developed in line with these guidelines to ensure maximum program effectiveness.

For more information and research references, please visit our website:
<http://www.worde.org/programs/applying-social-integration-theory/>

There are various types of programming executed by FCWG’s focus areas:

FOCUS AREAS	EXAMPLES OF PROGRAMING
<p>SOLIDARITY PROGRAMMING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Annual Interfaith Friendship Picnics (with over 1,000 participants) ■ Celebrating Harmony (an interfaith concert) ■ 9/11 Unity Walk (a parade to demonstrate social cohesion) ■ Greening our Sacred Grounds (an environmental awareness colloquium for faith-based organizations) ■ Interfaith Prayer for Ebola Relief
<p>INTERVENTION AND THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understanding the Violent Extremist Threat to the Homeland ■ Online Radicalization and Safety Seminars ■ Youth workshops to Prevent Cyber Bullying and Protect Youth from Online Predators ■ Understanding Violent Extremism (Community awareness briefings) ■ Town hall events with the Montgomery County Chief of Police, and the County Executive ■ Disaster and Emergency Preparedness ■ Emotional, Spiritual Care Volunteer training¹¹⁷
<p>FAITH LEADER RESPONSE TEAM FOR ACTS OF HATE OR VIOLENCE [FLRT]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Press conference against anti-Semitic attacks at a local synagogue. ■ Rally at Rockville Metro to condemn Anti-Islamic bus ads ■ Lessons learned from Baltimore riots

117. In 2014, the FCWG trained and certified a cohort of volunteers who can respond in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. The cohort consists of 40 county residents from diverse faiths who can be dispatched to provide emotionally and spiritually informed care in the event of an county emergency.

Participants in FGDs indicated the following best practices for attracting participants for programming, as well as sustaining community interest:

- Involve County Executive and other high-level county officials who have ‘convening power.’ Including these officials also motivates multiple stakeholders to be part of the process, because it can give the community-led initiative legitimacy and authority to implement change.
- Highlight shared objectives for potential participants. For securing the interest of county government officials, it is helpful to explain that communities have vast untapped resources that the country could mobilize.
- Advertise programming through multiple outlets: on social media (Instagram was found to be most popular amongst middle school students – more than Facebook or Twitter), on community newspapers / info-portals, and in newspapers.
- Develop an ‘elevator pitch’ to briefly summarize the scope and purpose of your community-led initiative.
- Use empowering terminology to brand your initiative — *e.g.* “Creating an inclusive, resilient society.”
- Sponsor general interest events, to broaden recruitment base — *e.g.* 5k run/walk for a worthy cause.
- For programming that targets K-12 students, target outreach to students during lunchtime, on PA announcements and student newspapers.
- Promote program outcomes — *e.g.* social service learning hours.
- Foster a welcoming environment by having refreshments and an inclusive atmosphere.
- Give key stakeholders empowering roles.
- Involve food whenever possible! Breaking bread is vitally important to bringing people together.

Challenges to Multi-cultural Collaborations

It is important to note that interfaith collaboration is not always a smooth process. It is often challenging to get people to see their cross-group commonalities, and to reverse their prejudices. WORDE’s International Cultural Center (ICC), which hosts many FCWG events, offers a neutral, non-religious setting for various groups to coalesce. As one FGD said, “the ICC brings together groups, and that makes ‘others’ less strange.”

While many participants, particularly faith leaders are already open to inter-religious cooperation; some participants are ‘on the fence’, or do not see the utility in such programming. Sustained engagement with these individuals is vital because they have an enormous capacity to positively influence others in their social networks, particularly those who may have intolerant attitudes.

❖ 3.4 The Four Interrelated Parts of the Model

Provide Handout 1 to students.

PPT 9

The goal of the MCM is to empower communities to intervene in the lives of vulnerable individuals, **before they choose a path of violence**. The model educates a wide range of stakeholders about the potential risk factors of violent extremism and empowers them to intervene and refer individuals for services, as the need arises. The MCM has four interrelated components:

- **Engage** Partners
- **Educate** Stakeholders
- **Connect** the Public to Vital Resources
- **Intervene**

We will explore each component more deeply and provide examples and recommendations that can be adapted for different contexts.

Lessons Learned in Implementing the MCM

❖ 3.4a ENGAGE

Cultivating long-term community partnerships can be carried out through the following four steps:

PPT 10

- **IDENTIFY:** Conduct research to identify 1-2 key non-governmental stakeholders who can *anchor* the government-community collaboration.
- **VET:** Ensure that potential partners uphold a set of shared values — e.g. democratic values, support for religious freedom of all persons, respect for societal pluralism, etc.
- **ENGAGE:** Facilitate community-led initiatives with government officials, law enforcement and the community.
- **EMPOWER:** Support your key partners to execute programs and conduct interventions. (In many

cases, this requires providing adequate training, resources and capacity building. See Educating Stakeholders section below)

Key Stakeholders in the MCM

The MCM engages a wide range of public and private stakeholders, including:

- The Montgomery County Executive's Office of Community Partnerships
- Montgomery County Police Department
- Diverse Faith Community Leaders
- Social Service Providers
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Health & Human Services
- Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security (OEMHS)]





Discussion Questions

- In your opinion, what are the greatest barriers to better CVE-related, law enforcement community collaborations? Discuss your ideas with a colleague. How do your opinions differ?
- What do you think the Muslim American community could do to improve relations with local government? (Potential responses include: Be more pro-active, dispel myths or negative misperceptions of the police, approach law enforcement with community concerns, etc.).
- In the FGD, one law enforcement officer noted that Muslim communities “should not wait for something to happen” before initiating contact with a law enforcement officer. Instead, they should foster an ongoing relationship in which they “should ask for help if they need it.” What could your department do to facilitate long-term two-way communication with the community? (*Prompt:* You could consider organizing a monthly community-dialogue forum; approach community members at social events and ask if there is something the department could do to better serve their communities, disseminate key contact information and other information resources better, and increase social media outreach).
- Staff turnover may be a concern for some departments. What could you do to ensure that best practices with community-engagement and the relationships you have fostered will continue with the next officer who is tasked with outreach? (*Prompt:* You could maintain up-to-date databases of your community contacts; inform your current contacts of the new staff change; and arrange a meet and greet with your current community contacts to introduce them to the new engagement officer).

Creating a CVE Framework

Once the key stakeholders are identified it is important to create a CVE framework that everyone agrees upon. When WORDE first established the FCWG, they convened the Muslim members to get community “buy-in” for how issues relating to violent extremism should be discussed. WORDE decided to take a broad approach, focusing on all forms of violent extremism and identified broad indicators (discussed in Module 2) to help communities recognize individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalization. Community ownership and consensus over language and a framework of how to talk about issues related to violent extremism is crucial, especially for building long term trust and collaboration.

❖ 3.4b EDUCATE

Once primary stakeholders have been engaged, they need to be trained on the scope of the threat of violent extremism, potential risk factors of radicalization, the use of digital media in radicalizing and recruiting individuals, and steps the community can take to intervene—**especially in the pre-criminal, non-violent space.**

Lessons Learned

WORDE often designs their own seminars, but they also invite external subject matter experts, such as government officials to educate communities. For example, WORDE has hosted experts from the National Counter Terrorism Center to lead their Community Awareness Briefings (CAB). This presentation highlights recent cases of US persons who have radicalized to support violent extremist organizations. It explains the factors that influenced their radicalization and engages communities to think about initiatives that they can develop to prevent violent extremism.

Although these presentations have been instrumental in spurring conversations amongst the community about the scope of the threat, WORDE specialists have found that such briefings resonate more with communities when the content is led by community leaders, rather than a federal government official. In the future, training initiatives to equip community leaders to conduct such trainings will be instrumental to building local CVE initiatives based upon the Montgomery County Model.

SPOTLIGHT

Youth Workshops—Teachers and counselors are critical stakeholders to engage, however youth might be in a better position than anyone else to recognize individuals in their social networks who may be vulnerable to engaging in violent behaviors.¹¹⁸ (This is particularly relevant in the digital age, where youth are more prone to share their personal thoughts and emotions on social media).

To empower youth to identify someone in need of an intervention, it is important to adapt training and educational initiatives specifically for this demographic. For example, youth should understand the potential warning signs of someone who is radicalizing, just as they should identify friends who may need help coping with depression, drug abuse, suicidal ideation, or eating disorders and know when that information should be reported to a trusted adult. Furthermore, youth need to be made aware of available interventions options, so that they may proactively, and effectively, shepherd their friends to helpful service providers.



118. Williams, M. J., Horgan, J. G., & Evans, W. P. (2015). The critical role of friends in networks for countering violent extremism: Toward a theory of vicarious help-seeking. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, 1–21. doi:10.1080/19434472.2015.1101147



Examples of MCM Trainings and Workshops

Sample program ideas:



- Training on Islamic Culture and Community Engagement for Law Enforcement
- A Workshop on Understanding potential Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalization
- Social Media Training for Community Leaders to Offset Extremist Content Online
- Understanding the Homegrown Violent Extremist Threat
- Internet Safety Workshops
- Disaster Preparation Training
- Securing Houses of Worship Against Threat of Harm to Property or People

SPOTLIGHT

Conducting Relevant and Timely Trainings—

Expanding cultural competency opportunities and offering Islamic education to law enforcement officers were popular recommendations posited by FGD participants to improve community-policing efforts. These training modules afford officers an opportunity to better relate to the community and to understand their needs. One participant also suggested that training sessions could be conducted during “slow periods,” for example, the spring or summer school breaks, which might enable additional law enforcement personnel to attend.



Discussion Questions

- What type of trainings would be required in your jurisdiction?
- Can you think of any potential trainers that could provide this training? If not, what outreach strategy would you utilize to identify qualified trainers? (Possible answers include: Universities, contact local FBI field office, or federal officials in DHS or NCTC who have arranged Community Awareness Briefings).



ENGAGEMENT TIP

Community Awareness Briefings on Radicalization: Key Recommendations

An important objective of the White House’s *Strategic Implementation Plan*¹¹⁹ is to empower communities to become pro-active partners in CVE. However, Muslim communities often feel that in the post 9/11 era, their engagement with government officials is unidirectional, and as a result, often feel like a ‘suspect community’ rather than partners in promoting mutually shared objectives. In order to avoid stigmatizing any single community, it is advisable to include multiple communities to collectively develop solutions to prevent violent extremism. By bringing diverse faith and multi-disciplinary partners together, it fosters trust between the community stakeholders and the government, but also between the various community partners with one another.

Where it is appropriate to conduct engagement initiatives with the Muslim community exclusively, to discuss CVE, the following recommendations can help guide that engagement:

- Offer to meet with several community leaders prior to the broader community engagement to discuss the parameters of the agenda, and objectives. Be sure to discuss mutual goals between the law enforcement and the community, such as creating safe and healthy neighborhoods. This meeting should also set a clear agenda for the broader community engagement so that the discussion is focused on strategies to prevent violent extremism and develop safe and resilient communities. If community members have additional concerns (e.g. immigration processes, airport safety, etc.) that could potentially ‘sidetrack’ the meeting, note these concerns and offer to schedule a separate meeting to address these concerns.
- Keep in mind that the nomenclature regarding the CVE agenda may be controversial for some communities; therefore invite the community representatives to suggest ways to frame the CVE agenda that would resonate amongst the broader community.
- For initial discussions with the community about CVE, it is important to create a baseline understanding of the threat of violent extremism, along with potential risk factors of radicalization. Keep in mind that the average Muslim is unfamiliar with extremist narratives—they have not researched these issues nor is it discussed often in social or religious settings. To inform communities of the threat, invite topical experts such as religious scholars and terrorism analysts who understand communities’ sensitivities regarding CVE. Trainers, for example, should be careful not to conflate being religiously conservative with becoming radicalized, because religiosity does not lead to violence.
- Once the community and law enforcement officials have the tools to recognize the problem, facilitate a discussion to strategize practical steps that the community can take to prevent “homegrown radicalization.”

119. “Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States,” *Executive Office of the President of the United States*, December 2011, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/sip-final.pdf>

SPOTLIGHT

What Makes Training Modules Effective?

Several suggestions emerged from the FGDs where participants recommended the following:

- Draw from real-life case studies of individuals who have attempted or successfully joined violent extremist organizations to illustrate how potential risk factors of radicalization affect vulnerable individuals.
- Highlight stories of families who have lost their youth to violent extremist organizations and examples of community-led CVE efforts across the country.
- Use multi-media presentations with videos
- Allow ample time for Q&A
- Invite trainers that are topical experts in the fields of violent extremism, radicalization, community organizing, etc.
- Draw parallels to other crime prevention models — e.g. gang prevention

ENGAGEMENT TIP

Communities need guidelines about available resources (e.g. social service providers, gang intervention experts, mentors, and counselors, etc.) for at-risk individuals and in some cases where there is an imminent threat, what agency they should contact. Throughout the FGDs, participants acknowledged specifically that communities should be aware of which authorities they should contact, when to contact them, and at what stage making the call is “too late.” For example, in Montgomery County, MD, our program emphasizes the need to refer vulnerable individuals to community care providers before there is an imminent threat of harm that requires a law enforcement interdiction. The goal is to provide care in the pre-criminal space but if the risk of harm is too great, then the community has a strong relationship with the police to make that referral as well.

❖ 3.4c CONNECT

Once stakeholders are educated, it is important to develop an infrastructure to refer at risk individuals to individual and organizational resources that can address their needs.

PPT 12

- **Key individuals to engage** include social service providers, teachers, coaches, school guidance counselors, school resource officers, religious leaders, mentors, parents and friends.
- **Key organizations and institutions to engage** include houses of worship, faith based organizations, K-12 schools, universities, community centers, social services organizations and county agencies such as Health and Human Services.



❖ 3.4d INTERVENE

Interventions that seek to reduce potential risk factors of radicalization are carried out through a number of channels including county social service providers and the county’s crisis intervention team.

FIGURE 2. EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS

POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS	INTERVENTION EXAMPLES
<p>Psychological conditions (e.g. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide counseling services that are trauma-informed and culturally competent; services should be provided in language or through a trained medical interpreter
<p>Economic conditions (e.g. unemployment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Facilitate access to safety net services or direct service providers who can provide assistance securing vocation training, job search assistance and/or employment. ■ Counseling services may help individuals cope with feelings such as hopelessness, guilt/shame, frustration and/or depression that can result from stressors of relative deprivation
<p>Sociological motivators (e.g. social alienation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Foster a positive social network: create access to social activities, after-school programs, and other activities that can lead to positive social interactions ■ Counseling services ■ Mentoring/buddy system for adapting to life in the US.
<p>Ideologies that justify the use of violence to resolve grievances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mentoring or counseling from a community leader or religious scholar ■ Access to events and communities that foster value pluralism and positive integration

Case Study of an Intervention

“Taha”¹²⁰ was referred to the social services agency, Crossroads,¹²¹ by a School Resource Officer (SRO) after he had reportedly threatened to kill one of his classmates.

In their in-take assessment, Crossroads staff learned that Taha was struggling with post-traumatic stress syndrome, having fled from a conflict-affected country. As a result, he had difficulty focusing in class, his grades were deteriorating, and teachers commented that he “could become angry quickly”. Taha was struggling to make friends in his school, and one of his classmates was unrelentingly bullying him with taunts to “go back to where you came from.” After several attempts to ask the student to stop, out of frustration, Taha said he would shoot his classmate. Taha later stated that he did not actually want to shoot anyone but rather meant it as a “figure of speech.” When the school administrators learned of this, one of their courses of action was in-school detention. However, Taha refused to comply because he felt intimidated by the other students in detention, who he believed were trying to sell him drugs. The school considered expelling Taha if he continued to refuse completing his detention.

Utilizing an ecological approach, Crossroads intervened in a number of ways:

- 1) Taha was provided with individual counseling to address symptoms of PTSD, anxiety and anger management. Taha developed personal strategies to decrease these symptoms and practiced with his counselor in session.
- 2) Taha was connected to a tutor that could assist him with his school work and help increase his confidence in the classroom.
- 3) Taha was referred to after-school programs to build his social support network.
- 4) A counselor met with Taha’s mother to provide psycho-education on the symptoms of PTSD, anxiety and anger management and discussed how she could help Taha at home.
- 5) Taha’s mother reported feeling disconnected and alienated by the school. A counselor helped her set up an appointment with the school counselor and Taha’s teachers to better understand what the concerns were and to take a more proactive role in addressing them.

A year since Taha was referred to Crossroads, he is now involved in numerous extra-curricular activities, applying to colleges and his school counselor believes the intervention changed the “course of this young man’s life forever”.

120. The name and minor details of the case are altered to protect client confidentiality.

121. The Crossroads Program was established by WORDE to provide mentoring and access to social services for individuals who have low to moderate incomes, especially women and teens, who suffer from trauma, anger management, acculturation difficulties, or emotional disorders that make their transition to life in the US more difficult. The target populations are South Asian, Middle Eastern, and North/West/East African communities, which are currently underserved by existing programs within Montgomery County.

❖ 3.5 Measuring Effectiveness: A Multi-Method Approach

Evaluating prevention programs can be particularly challenging. WORDE utilizes a multi-method approach that combines qualitative and quantitative measures; rigorous academic evaluations and community-centered questionnaires.

PPT 14

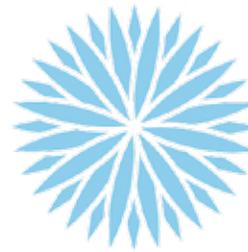
WORDE's Evaluation Tools

- Qualitative and quantitative data that capture participant satisfaction.
- Focus group discussions, surveys and in-depth interviews to evaluate efficacy in reducing social tension, encouraging help-seeking behaviors and promoting public-safety.

Montgomery County Model is the subject of two rigorous evaluations. The first research and evaluation study, funded by the National Institute of Justice, which sought to evaluate the efficacy of WORDE's community-led CVE program.¹²² The study found that WORDE's programs had several CVE relevant outcomes. Specifically, our multi-cultural programs were effective in:

1. Making people feel welcome, and that they were part of something bigger than themselves.
2. Making people feel useful, and helped them cultivate a sense of purpose in their lives.
3. Providing participants with a safe space where they felt accepted, and free of peer pressure.
4. Providing a place where participants could learn about cultures other than their own and make friendships that are active beyond the event.
5. Making people feel they were not lonely or afraid to talk to others.

122. <https://www.uml.edu/Research/CTSS/Research-Projects.aspx#Evaluation>.



In short, by following decades of research in how to promote positive social integration, WORDE was able to achieve these CVE-relevant outcomes. Moreover, by doing so, our programs also had the intended effect of reducing several potential psychosocial and ideological risk factors (e.g. marginalization, social alienation, intolerance, or a lack of a sense of purpose) while increasing protective factors such as encouraging new social networks and creating a sense of purpose in their lives.

WORDE is also leading a Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)-funded study in partnership with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), who will identify additional good practices from the MCM for replicating the program in other jurisdictions.

❖ 3.6 Group Activity: Developing a Strategy to Implement a Community- Led Initiative for CVE

Work together in pairs to develop a strategic plan for your own community-led Initiative for CVE

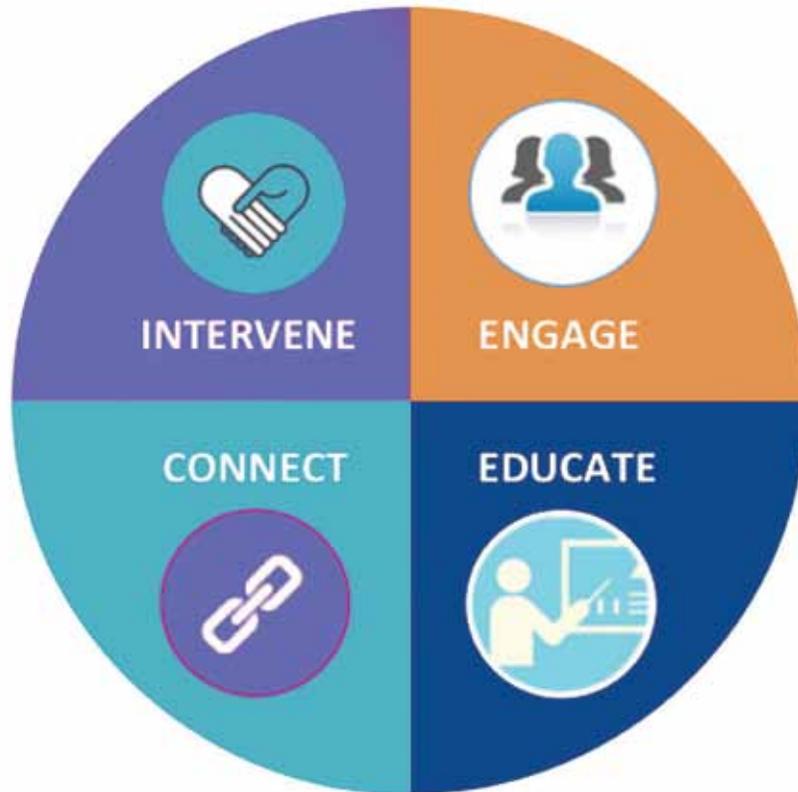
PPT 15

(See handout 1 for detailed instruction).

SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Prevention programs can be implemented at the community level and require strong collaboration between a diverse cohort of stakeholders such as law enforcement, local community leaders, social service providers, schools, multiple faith groups, etc.
- Community members need to be trained on how to identify potential risk factors of radicalization so they can refer vulnerable individuals for help before they become violent. Parents, teachers, coaches, mentors, friends and peers are often closest to a vulnerable individual and have a valuable capacity to intervene.
- Faith-based institutions possess immense amounts of social capital and can help mobilize community members to develop solutions to a wide range of concerns.
- Prevention models are often multi-faceted with interrelated components. WORDE's model has four parts: Engage, Educate, Coordinate and Intervene.
- An effective model requires developing a CVE framework that can be used for trainings and to assess efficacy of the program. It's important to create a framework that resonates with community partners and key stakeholders that can serve as a common language for all participants.
- Establishing horizontal connections and collaborative relationships between community partners is critical to building cohesion and is one of the most effective aspects of WORDE's prevention program.
- Evaluating prevention programs can be challenging and requires multi-method approaches that includes both qualitative and quantitative methods and participation from universities and other partner organizations to assess progress and efficacy.

Developing a Prevention and Intervention Program



In pairs, discuss what a prevention and intervention program might look like in your community. Using the four-part early model as a template, brainstorm what resources would be needed for each quadrant. For example:

I. ENGAGE:

- 1.1 Who should be involved? Make a list of important public and private partners that could participate (*e.g. social service providers, faith leaders, school counselors, coaches, parents, etc.*).
- 1.2 Identify one or two lead non-governmental organizations that could help anchor the community-led initiative:
- 1.3 Which local government agency or agencies would take the lead in (co) convening the program?

1.4 Explain what criteria (e.g. registered 501 c (3) organization with linkages to diverse communities) or shared values you will use for vetting partners and key stakeholders?

1.5 How will you engage faith communities and other civil society partners?

2. EDUCATE

2.1 How will you educate your stakeholders?
(Consider the current gaps, or resources required within your community to carry out effective CVE programing.)

3. CONNECT

3.1 How will you connect your stakeholders with public and private resources that can provide counseling and other safety net services for vulnerable individuals?

4. INTERVENE

4.1 What services could be provided for the most vulnerable members of your community?
(e.g. counseling, assistance accessing social services, mentoring, mental health services)

4.2 Identify which public/private agency is ideally positioned to carry out these services:

4.3 How would you measure success?

4.4 What indicators could you use to determine whether a current intervention is not working, or if an individual requires additional assistance?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What will you call the program?

How will you fund this program?

How would you get public support and community buy-in?

Additional Sources and Resources

- A Framework for Prevention and Intervention Strategies: Incorporating Violent Extremism into Violence Prevention Efforts,” US Attorney’s Office, District of Massachusetts (February 2015), <http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/usao-ma/pages/attachments/2015/02/18/framework.pdf>
- The Los Angeles Framework for Countering Violent Extremism,” Developed by the Los Angeles Inter-agency Coordination Group in Collaboration with Community Stakeholders (February 2015), <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Los%20Angeles%20Framework%20for%20CVE-Full%20Report.pdf>
- Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, “Countering Violent Extremism in America,” *The George Washington University Center for Cyber and Homeland Security, Program on Extremism* (June 2015). <https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/CVE%20in%20America%20.pdf>
- Hayat Counseling | De-radicalization | Network, <http://hayat-deutschland.de/english/>
- Exit Sweden <http://exit.fryshuset.se/>
- Strong Cities Network <http://strongcitiesnetwork.org/>
- Radicalization Awareness Network: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/index_en.htm
- Life After Hate: <http://www.lifeafterhate.org/>



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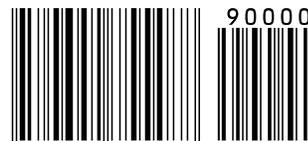
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