Examine various government and non-government intervention programs which divert, disengage or deradicalise individuals at risk of or currently engaged in a violent extremism ideology.

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Signed:  Mike Bell

Date:  17 October 2015
# Table of Contents

Coversheet  
Table of Contents  
Acknowledgements and Author Contact Details  
Introduction  
Programme  
Violent Extremism and Radicalisation – An Overview  

## Government and Non-Government Agencies
- Institute for Strategic Dialogue  
- Active Change Foundation  
- Exit Fryshuset  
- Hayat Canada Family Support  
- Charter Northern Ireland  
- Police Service of Northern Ireland  
- Police Services  
  - London Metropolitan Police Service  
  - Ontario Provincial Police  
  - Toronto Police Service  
  - Integrated National Security Team Enforcement  
  - Calgary Police Service

Conclusion  
Recommendations  
Proposed Intervention Structure Schematic  
References
Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for affording me the unique opportunity to travel internationally and examine various government and non-government programs designed to divert, disengage or deradicalise individuals at risk of or engaged in a violent extremism ideology. It was indeed a privilege to meet with subject matter experts and exchange ideas, thoughts and information on violent extremism intervention programs.

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Lastly and arguably most importantly, I acknowledge and thank my very understanding wife, Angela, and two-year old son, Henry, for their support and inspiration throughout my Churchill Fellowship journey, without which I would not have been able to pursue this inimitable opportunity.

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Introduction

“Nothing is easier than to denounce the evil doer; nothing is more difficult than to understand him”

Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821 – 1881)

A central and valued tenet of liberal democracies like Australia are the political, religious, ideological and intellectual freedoms of its citizens. These freedoms are extended on the assumption that citizens are moral and rational entities and that these freedoms will be exercised in accordance with accepted community values, standards and norms.

Assuming an extremist ideology does not breach statue laws such as racial vilification, their expression will generally be tolerated within liberal democracies but traditionally garner little, if any community support. However, the advocating for or prosecution of violence to advance extremist ideologies within these environments will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Actual, threatened or perceived violence in this context has a detrimental effect on community safety, security and social cohesion as well as economic prosperity.

Violent extremists generally operate in an asymmetrical power environment and as such, are unable to match the overwhelming resources and influence of the government to realise their particular ideology. This impotence leads the extremists to enact isolated high impact/low technical (e.g. knife) acts of violence that are usually symbolic in nature. The apparent randomness of the violence causes community members to question their own vulnerability to further attacks thus creating a milieu of fear. The extremists anticipate this ground swell of fear will influence the government to acquiesce to their demands in order to prevent further acts of violence.

Complicating this situation can be a phenomenon known as ‘reactive group radicalisation’ whereby opponents to an extremist group themselves radicalise into violence in response to a real or perceived threat by the extremists. The extremists then elevate their posture in response to that of their opponents.

To avoid the high economic and social costs of violent extremism, intervention must occur well in advance of the violent act occurring by diverting individuals considered ‘at-risk’ of radicalising into a violent extremist ideology or disengaging and/or deradicalising those already radicalised. Importantly, intervention programs must be viewed as legitimate and trustworthy by the community as it is members of the community associated with radicalised/ing individual who will recognise key behavioural changes in them and enable early intervention - as long as they have the confidence to report it. To achieve this, intervention programs must respect human and civil rights and not stigmatise the individual or their cultural, ethnic or religious groups. Intervention programs must be bespoke in nature to address specific factors contributing towards an individual’s radicalisation and take advantage of any opportunities to divert/disengage them from violence and to reconnect them with their community and social structures.
### Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date / Location</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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| **Stockholm, Sweden**  
15 – 18 June 2015 | Exit Fryshuset  
([http://exit.fryshuset.se/english/](http://exit.fryshuset.se/english/)) |
| **London, England**  
22 – 26 June 2015 | Institute for Strategic Dialogue  
([http://www.strategicdialogue.org](http://www.strategicdialogue.org))  
Active Change Foundation  
([http://www.activechangefoundation.org](http://www.activechangefoundation.org)) |
| 29 June – 2 July 2015 | London Metropolitan Police Service (SO 15)  
([http://content.met.police.uk/Article/Counter-Terrorism-Command/1400006569170/1400006569170](http://content.met.police.uk/Article/Counter-Terrorism-Command/1400006569170/1400006569170)) |
| **Belfast, Northern Ireland**  
6 – 10 July 2015 | Charter Northern Ireland  
([http://www.charterni.org](http://www.charterni.org)) |
| 13 – 16 July 2015 | Police Service of Northern Ireland  
([http://www.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)) |
| **Toronto, Canada**  
20 – 24 July 2015 | Toronto Police Service  
([http://www.torontopolice.on.ca](http://www.torontopolice.on.ca))  
Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams  
Ontario Provisional Police  
| **Calgary, Canada**  
27 – 30 July | Hayat Canada Family Support  
([http://hayatcanada.webs.com](http://hayatcanada.webs.com))  
Calgary Police Service  
([http://www.calgary.ca/cps](http://www.calgary.ca/cps)) |
Violent Extremism and Radicalisation – An Overview

The following overview into violent extremism and radicalisation will afford the reader a rudimentary insight into these complex phenomena and provide some context to this paper.

An ‘extremist’ is an individual who supports a political, religious or ideological (PRI) cause which is outside those widely accepted by their community. Importantly, extremism is not synonymous with violence or negativity, in fact some PRI causes once considered extreme have bought about positive societal change, such as the Suffragettes of the late 19th and early 20th century who advanced women’s participation in society.

A ‘violent extremist’ (VE), however, is an individual who advocates for or prosecutes acts of unlawful violence designed to advance their extremist PRI cause. This term incorporates acts widely referred to as terrorism as well acts of unlawful communal violence which are motivated by a PRI cause, such as racially motivated assaults designed to advance an ideology of racial supremacy. Conversely, the VE term does not extend to acts of violence that are not motivated by a PRI cause. This point is best exampled by juxtaposing the 1996 Port Arthur (Australia) mass shooting by Martin Bryant (35 killed, 23 injured) against the 2011 bombing and mass shooting in Norway by Anders Breivik (77 killed, 241 injured). Despite being equally tragic events and having some similarity in their attack methodology, Bryant was not motivated by a PRI cause but rather suffered from mental health issues. Breivik on the other hand was mentally competent but motivated by a far-right militant ideology.

Violent extremism is not a new phenomenon and has in fact been a constant feature of modern history. Richardson (2006) contends that the earliest precursor to today’s contemporary VE groups were the Zealots, a Jewish group who sought to eradicate Roman rule from Palestine in the 1st century. The Zealots, so named because of their fanaticism, targeted both their Roman rulers and any individual cooperating with them, including other Jews. Many of the violent attacks were conducted in public to ensure the transmission of their deeds and instil a milieu of fear within their community with the belief this would ultimately achieve their goal. Many of the fundamental principles which underpinned the Zealots’ violent extremism in the 1st century have been replicated in countless extremist groups throughout modern history.

Similar to extremism, radicalisation is not synonymous with violence, however, some individuals do undergo a “…process by which they come to adopt extremist political beliefs with a particular emphasis on those ideologies that encourage violent action” (Helfstein, 2012, p.6).

There is no single profile for individuals susceptible to radicalisation and the actual radicalisation process varies for each individual. That said, extremists seek to radicalise others into their PRI cause by focusing more on social concepts, such as a sense of belonging, identity, loyalty, greatness or even the fear of exclusion, rather than their actually ideology:

“Academics like to focus on ideas and ideology, but emotions, social bonds and experiences also play a crucial role. For many who become caught up in violent extremism, social networks are much more important than ideology” (Barton, 2013).
Dr. Tawfik Hamid (2008), who was himself once radicalised into a violent Salafi jihadist ideology argues that the radicalisation process is a gradual and subtle mental process which influences three key aspects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hatred</th>
<th>It is difficult to prosecute an act of violence against another if the aggressor doesn’t harbour a sense of hatred towards their opponent.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suppression of conscience</td>
<td>Even if an aggressor has hatred towards his perceived opponent, their conscience must be suppressed to enable them to overcome any internal questions of unethical or immoral conduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desensitisation to violence</td>
<td>Even with hatred towards their opponent and their conscience suppressed, the aggressor must be desensitised to the violence about to be prosecuted.</td>
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To achieve this, radicalisers will utilise persuasive narratives which:

- Simplify a complex situation;
- Promote the proselytiser and/or the VE group as enlightened, virtuous and altruistic;
- Legitimise the VE’s cause and espouse its benefits;
- Distance the VE’s from their victims and dehumanise them;
- Justify the use of violence to attain their PRI goal and argue there is no other option; and
- Provide moral justification for the violence which overshadows any moral qualms.

There are a number of recognisable behavioural changes a radicalised/ing individual will display regardless of the motivating PRI. These changes can be categorised into three broad areas:

- **Social relations** - As the radicalisation intensifies the individual will likely gravitate further away from their established moderate social relationships (family and friends) and create new ones with like-minded individuals. The individual and their group will likely become increasingly secretive and elusive. If their radicalisation involves a place of worship, they may disassociate themselves from that place because they do not consider it pious enough or alternatively, may be asked to leave because of their incongruent views.

- **Ideology** - As the radicalisation intensifies the individual espouses and demonstrates increasingly greater commitment to the ideology and rejects more moderate views. The individual’s dress, language and practices will likely change in line with the ideology.

- **Criminal orientation** - As the radicalisation intensifies the individual may commit or support criminal acts. For example, the individual may start out committing graffiti in support of an ideology, progress to committing crimes to fund the extremist group and ultimately move to undertaking acts of violence (Australian Government, 2015).

The aforementioned behavioural changes are most readily identified by those familiar with the radicalised/ing individual’s usual behaviour, conduct and persona, such as family, friends, neighbours and employers. It is paramount that these people have complete trust and confidence in the intervention program and its providers they are reporting their loved one to. Should they harbour any distrust, early identification and intervention will be unlikely as will the opportunity to avert a potential attack.
Organisational Background
The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) is located in London. It is an independent ‘think and do’ tank which collaborates with European leaders from academia, politics, business, media and civil society to address major geo-strategic social and security challenges. The ISD achieves this through an amalgamation of research and policy, advisory work, innovative delivery programs, specialised task forces and cross-sector partnerships and networks. One of ISD’s areas of expertise is preventing violent extremism.

ISD have a number of quality publications which I encourage any person with an interest in violent extremism to read. Much of my discussions with ISD personnel and that which is articulated below is covered in greater detail in two of their publications: The Need for Exit Programs (Ramalingam & Tuck, 2015) and Western Foreign Fighters – Innovations in Responding to the Threat (Briggs & Silverman, 2014).

Key Findings
1. **Place an equal emphasis on downstream intervention programs** which assist current VEs successfully exit from their extremist group. Upstream diversion programs focus on ‘at-risk’ individual which does not affect the VE group’s recruiting drive or acts of violence. Downstream programs which assist current VEs exit from their group will destabilise/dismantle the group through a reduction in impetus, activity and membership. Further, the groups existing members may question their own affiliation.

2. **Intervention programs must be bespoke** to the individual and based on a thorough assessment of their antecedents and motivations for becoming a member of a VE group, such as social status, identity, violence, protection etc. Conversely, there must be a similar understanding of what motivated an individual to consider exiting the group, such as social pressures, burn out or frustration. These factors will inform what the most effective strategies to assist the VE are.

3. **Radicalisers focus on social aspects when recruiting more so than the ideology** therefore intervention programs must ultimately reconnect the individual back to their pre-radicalisation community networks and social structures. This reverses the dehumanisation/demonisation strategy of the radicalisers by highlighting the similarities between the individual and their community and social structures.

4. **Cognitive openings need to be created** in the mind of the radicalised/ing individual to cause them to question their certitude in the values, beliefs and propaganda of the extremists. Cognitive behavioural therapy strategies which achieve this include:

   4a) **Motivational interviewing techniques** which stimulate the individual’s own intrinsic motivators and utilise this to change their behaviour. Motivational interviewing is described as “a directive, client-centred counselling style for eliciting behaviour change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence” (Rollnick and Miller, 1995).

   4b) **‘The Empowerment Conversation’** which “focuses on understanding the individual’s goals and sense of self and promoting a positive view of the self – which can lead to an ultimate change in attitude towards others” (Ramalingam & Tuck, 2015).
4c) **Reflective thinking** which encourages individuals to assess and reconcile their past conduct and behaviour.

5. **The use of suitable former extremists** (formers) in intervention programs is crucial. Formers have the advantage of having lived the VE lifestyle which the individual is seeking to enter/exit therefore they have legitimacy, credibility and connection. Formers also have a sound knowledge of the structures, customs, language and philosophies of the VE group and can readily relate to the exiting member. Formers are well placed to assist exiting members reflect on their ideology and question the social, emotional and economic cost of being a VE by seamlessly moving between the two viewpoints (VE and former VE). They also serve as a positive role model for life after violent extremism.

6. **Don't directly challenge an individual's extremist views** even if they are seeking assistance to exit a VE group as they are well versed on the VE narrative/propaganda and accustomed to arguing these points. Direct challenges on ideology will likely elicit a defensive posture from the individual which will likely close out further engagement and drive them back to the safety and comfort of the VE group.

7. **Most VE interventions will be a long-term prospect (2 – 4 years)** and require a collaborative approach with other government and non-government stakeholders.

8. **Information sharing is crucial** between government and non-government agencies, however, it is problematic due to information sharing restrictions, some of which may be overcome with Memorandums of Understandings and/or redacting information.

9. **Intervention programs must not be used as intelligence gathering platforms** by government agencies. This would have a detrimental impact on the legitimacy of the program and evaporate trust and confidence in the program.

10. **The safety and health of case workers needs to be constantly assessed** to ensure they remain effective in their jobs. Dealing with VEs can generate security issues for employees so workplace cultures, policies and practices which optimise safety are essential. Also, constantly dealing with VEs and their negative ideology can become a burden to the case worker and have an adverse impact on their own health, personal and professional relationships and work performance. Intervention providers need to constantly evaluate how their case workers are coping and have access to employee assistance programs where issues are identified. Lastly, case workers need to have a clear understanding of their legal obligations to report matters where the life, wellbeing or property of others is at significant threat.
Active Change Foundation

Organisational Background
The Active Change Foundation (ACF) is based in Walthamstow, north-east of London. ACF is a non-government organisation which promotes social integration and cohesion by confronting and preventing gang and hate crime, violent extremism and community tensions. The ACF has employees with extensive personal experiences of street crime and violent extremism. The ACF leverage off this experience to direct disaffected youths into more positive courses of action.

My time at the ACF was spent with its co-founder, Mike Jervis. Whilst Mike was very accommodating with respect to overviewing the ACF’s intervention work, he highlighted that the ACF have a commercial interest in their intervention material and utilise them as a funding stream for ACF. For these reasons, intervention information was kept broad.

Key Findings
1. The ACF youth drop in centre naturally attracts their target audience (youths between 8 and 25 years old) through a number of recreational activities available at the centre, such as computers, video games, pool tables, self-defense classes and a gym. These activities, however, are secondary to the underlying intervention work they conduct.

2. Social contracts are signed by youths attending ACF which allows them to access the recreation facilities in exchange for their participation in various workshops and classes.

3. ACF case workers have personal experience in gang/street violence or violent extremism and are cleared by the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism prior to their employment with the ACF. Once cleared, these people receive further training relative to their intervention role, such as counselling or conflict resolution. Trusting relationships between ACF case workers and disaffected youths are paramount to the success of their interventions therefore the ACF value their case workers past experience as it gives them credibility and standing with their target audience. Further, it affords them an insight into what the disaffected individual is experiencing and what propaganda, ideology, language and rituals they are being exposed to.

4. Thorough analysis of the individual's life is paramount as it informs intervention opportunities such as addressing deprivations e.g. unemployment, general/mental health, housing, addictions or training. This also informs risk plans which must be evolutionary and consistently updated and referred to.

5. A secure case management system is run by ACF on their clients on a stand-alone computer to ensure control, governance and accountability. Information within this system is not shared with any other agency. Any case studies derived from the case management system are de-identified to ensure anonymity.

6. ‘Safe spaces’ are provided for individuals to safely explore/discuss a VE ideology. These ‘safe spaces’ are mediated by trained case workers who use various techniques to encourage the speaker to apply critical thinking skills and reflective practices. ‘Safe spaces’ include:
6a) **Facilitated Workshops:** ACF facilitate regular workshops on contemporary issues for youth, such as the violent Salafi jihadist ideology. ACF uses formers or people of standing (Imams) to explore the ideology being espoused and highlight its implications and any contradictions. The ACF may also explore peaceful options to support genuine causes, such as fund raising for humanitarian causes in Syria.

6b) **Pool for Life:** The case worker engages the youth in a game of billiards during which they will discretely probe the individual in order to understand a number of factors e.g. what is the ideology? What is the individual’s understanding/interpretation of it? What are the factors contributing to their radicalisation? What are the exit barriers? Who are the radicalisers? How committed is the individual?

6c) **Debate Club:** Individuals are encouraged to openly debate their PRI cause in a facilitated discussion forum with other youths and case workers. The facilitator deconstructs the ideology in a respectful manner and encourages the audience to contribute by identifying contradictions within the ideology or conflict with community values, norms and standards. The aim is to give the individual a platform to explore their ideology in a safe facilitated environment, encourage them to apply critical thinking skills, reflective thinking and to be positively influenced by their peers.

7. **The ACF helpline** is run with trained operators who field telephone calls from disaffected individuals or their family who are seeking help, advice or guidance. The helpline is facilitated in five languages which are reflective of the dominant cultures within their diverse community. The helpline provides an alternative for those not wishing to involve law enforcement or security agencies in their issue. Helpline operators are aware of their legal obligation to report matters of significant risk to law enforcement agencies, although their preferred option is to encourage the caller to report the matter.

8. **Outreach bicycle patrols within the local community** allows the ACF workers to engage with a wide range of locals to get an understanding of community issues/tensions and identify those susceptible to or radicalising into a violent extremism ideology. As a community service, the patrols are equipped with first aid kits and the riders are qualified first aiders.

9. **The health and safety of their case workers** is a key aspect of ACF’s work. Apart from monitoring them from a welfare perspective, they hold regular reflection sessions and debriefs and provide them support and training.

10. **Professional working relationship between the local police and ACF.** The ACF regularly invite police to their premise to assist with programs or engage with the youths. Despite this good working relationship, the only time information will be passed to the police is when lives and/or property are at significant risk of harm. ACF are not an intelligence collection platform.
Exit Fryshuset

Organisational Background
‘Fryshuset’ is the name given to the youth centre established in 1984 in a disused cold storage facility as a result of collaboration between the YMCA and Anders Carlberg. ‘Fryshuset’, which is Swedish for ‘cold storage facility’, is now the largest youth centre in the world with a 24,000 square metre facility in Stockholm. Fryshuset has four key streams; passionate interests, social projects, education and the labour market. Exit Fryshuset (EF) commenced in 1998 and sits within the ‘social projects’ stream of the Fryshuset organisation along with two other intervention programs - ‘Passus’ (gangs) and ‘Electra’ (honour related issues). EF was the focus of my visit.

My EF host, Robert Orell, is himself a former member of a nationalistic right-wing VE group. Robert describes how he was an ideal target for recruiters as a frustrated and angry teenager searching for an identity. As Robert explains, it wasn’t the ideology that attracted him into the group, it was more the social aspect. The radicaliser provided Robert clarity in his time of uncertainty by detailing an ‘us and them’ battle going on around him and explained how Robert was a ‘chosen one’ whose destiny was to serve his national interests via the group’s activities.

As part of Robert’s radicalisation, he was continually told how he and his group were superior to all others and as such, didn’t lower themselves by participating in illicit drug taking or criminal activity. Robert’s cognitive opening came after he had been in the group for a period of time and realised members of the group were in fact partaking in both of these activities. Fortunately for Robert, he undertook compulsory national service which imposed a hiatus from the group. Robert’s cognitive enlightenment continued to the point he completely disassociated from the group and ideology.

Key Findings
1. **EF have minimal official communications about their services** and simply relies on word-of-mouth to inform right-wing extremists seeking to exit from their group of the services they provide. EF have a minimal media profile.

2. **EF don’t publically discredit/challenge extremist ideology** as they are a passive organisation (i.e. they wait for radicalised/ing individuals to approach them for assistance) who focus on right-wing extremists already questioning their association with the ideology. EF feels that openly discrediting/challenging right-wing extremism may discourage some disillusioned extremists from contacting them.

3. **EF works on a five-step framework model:**
   3a) **Motivation** – The individual is still entrenched in the extremist group/ideology but is questioning the merits of it.

   3b) **Disengagement** – The individual has now made a conscious decision to separate from the extremist group/ideology but requires various forms of tailored assistance to achieve this e.g. emotional support, housing, employment etc.

   3c) **Settlement** – Having successfully separated from the group, the individual may begin to experience separation anxiety, a sense of isolation, identity issues etc.

   3d) **Reflection** – The individual reflects on his former life and may experience emotional distress in various forms, such as anxiety or depression.
3e) **Stabilisation** – The individual is now living a ‘normal life’, however, may experience anxiety through the belief their past will catch up with them. By now the individual is no longer formally on the program, however, informal contact may be maintained (Barrelle, n.d.).

4. **Cognitive dissonance** is a common feature for exiting VEs as their ideology has influenced every aspect of their life. Cognitive behavioural therapy practices (as discussed previously) are usually successful in assisting the individual to reconcile.

5. **The four phase process** EF utilise within their framework was explained by an case worker as:

5a) **Analysis** – A thorough examination of the individual is undertaken, including their antecedents, social structures, groups and relationships, employment, education, health and mental health, financial status, attitude, propensity to violence. Also assessed is the ideology the individual was involved in, the position they held in that group and potential risks to the individual of exiting. The structured professional judgment of the case workers is also an important input. All this information is then debriefed, discussed and assessed by a qualified psychologist employed by Fryshuset. From this thorough assessment, risks are identified, analysed and mitigated along with any deprivations contributing towards the radicalisation. Further, opportunities to reconnect the individual with their pre-radicalisation community networks and social structures are explored. Importantly, the analysis phase is an evolutionary one that is consistently updated and referred to.

5b) **Alliances** – Trust and confidence between the exiting individual and intervention provider/case worker is a crucial aspect as the individual will understandable be anxious about trusting someone outside their VE group at this vulnerable time. The stronger the alliance, the stronger the influence. Formers are generally able to form bonds quicker because they identify with the individual due to their prior experience.

5c) **Normalisation of experience** – The individual will have a number of emotional experiences throughout their exiting journey as they denounce their group and/or ideology. These emotional experiences need to be normalised and again, whilst others are able to achieve this, formers are a credible messenger who are able to more readily connect with the individual in a non-judgmental manner.

5d) **Modifying behaviour** – The analysis phase will heavily inform what intervention is required in this phase to assist the individual successfully exit from their group/ideology and reintegrate into their community. This will be a bespoke intervention plan and will include other providers delivering services to address issues of mental health, housing, education etc. EF has access to a panel of experts to assist them develop and implement bespoke intervention plans.

6. **Case workers need to remain cognisant of the primary and secondary emotional responses** which makes it difficult to accurately analyse an individual’s position. One case worker exampled this with an individual they had recently dealt with who was anxious about separating from their VE group (primary emotional response), however, displayed this as aggression (secondary emotional responses).
Hayat Canada Family Support

Organisational Background
Hayat Canada Family Support (HCFS) was founded in 2014 by Christianne Boudreau in her private residence in Calgary. Hayat is the Arabic term for ‘life’ and is modelled on the German organisation Exit, however, Exit focuses primarily on right-wing extremists.

HCFS is primarily concerned with interventions involving people radicalising into a violent Salafi jihadist ideology, such as Jabhat al-Nusra or Islamic State. HCFS has three stated goals:

- Do anything possible to make them voluntarily refrain from traveling to Syria
- If they are in Syria, stop fighting and return
- Once they return, ensure they are ensconced in a safe and controlled positive environment.

Christianne was unacquainted with radicalisation, VE's or VE intervention programs until her 22 year-old son, Damian Clairmont, travelled to Syria in November 2012. Despite her efforts to persuade Damian to return to Calgary, he met his demise a little over a year later whilst fighting for Jabhat al-Nusra near the city of Aleppo, Syria. Christianne went searching for answers and met with other mothers in identical circumstances and ultimately met with Daniel Koehler from the German Institute of Radicalisation and Deradicalisation Studies (GIRDS). Following these meetings, Christianne founded HCFS because of the difficulty she experienced in accessing radicalisation information and support and her not wanting others to experience the same.

Key Findings
1. **Recognise the importance of family, friends and other social structures** in an individual’s life and leverage off these existing social connections to positively influence the radicalised/ing individual. These key people must be provided appropriate mentoring, counselling or guidance on how to engage the radicalised/ing individual so as to create a cognitive opening through subtly challenging the VE ideology. Further, it is important to support these key people throughout the process as engaging with their radicalised/ing loved one can be emotionally draining on them.

2. **Mothers play a specific and powerful role** in intervention, even within cultures which outwardly seem to treat females as secondary to fathers/males. Refer to point 10a in this section Mothers for Life which demonstrates how they can be used effectively.

3. **HCFS is a ‘connector’ between the key people and other relevant institutions** such as police, social services and courts and will negotiate between these parties with a “comprehensive goal directed towards the concerned person” (HCFS, N.D.). Importantly, HCFS are very firm on the point that they will not gather intelligence for any other organisation. They feel that to do so would destroy their credibility with clients.

4. **A thorough risk assessment which is evolutionary and continually referred to.** HCFS utilises Violent Extremism Risk Assessment 2 (VERA2), which was developed by Dr. Elaine Pressman. Importantly, the final assessment with VERA2 is not solely based on the outcomes of the model, but incorporates the structured professional judgement of the assessor. The risk assessment is an evolutionary document that is built upon at every significant change to ensure that risks are identified, understood and mitigated.
5. **Radicalised/ing individuals who represent a significant threat** must be reported to a law enforcement agency immediately. HCFS will advise the family of this and attempt to persuade them to report the individual themselves or at least accompany them to that meeting. If the family refuses, the HCFS case worker will report the matter.

6. **Law enforcement/intelligence agencies must work with the families** of the radicalised/ing individuals and not alienate them. The radicalised/ing individual may, through their ideology, be uncooperative with these agencies therefore it is key to keep the lines of communication open with the family.

7. **The case management utilised by HCFS uses identifiers rather than names** (i.e. a number assigned to the individual to protect their identity). Further, files are peer reviewed and workshopped with the de-identified information to check for deficiencies and ensure develop intervention ideas.

8. **HCFS does not include an Islamic religious leader in the counselling team** as they have found that a radicalised/ing individual is not overly interested in the Koran or religious theology despite espousing it. The radicalised/ing individual may also feel ‘exposed’ by the religious leader due to their lack of knowledge of religious matters. Their experience is the radicalised/ing individual either disengages or declares the religious leader a ‘Takfir’.

9. **Monitoring case workers** for signs of burnout or excessive emotional investment during the course of an intervention is important. Case workers are provided extensive training at the commencement of their employment where these risks are explored in great detail along with coping strategies.

10. **Social media should be used to optimise positive messages.** HCFS utilise:

   10a) **Mothers for Life** is run via GIRDS and is a social media campaign using a mixture of Koranic messages of peace and a mothers loving message.

   10b) **Thunderclap** in layman’s terms, Thunderclap is a platform that amplifies an online message by prioritising it to a prominent position on the webpage when a certain search argument is entered. In the case of HCFS, when someone searches for something associated with violent Salafi jihadists, their associated messages of peace will appear in a prominent position on the page thus providing an alternate view. (Thunderclap, n.d.).

11. **Exit plans must be developed early** to structure the gradual withdrawal of services once the case has been ameliorated to a suitable level. This ensures the case worker, client and their family can adjust gradually to the change and not have services suddenly withdrawn which may create anxiety.
Charter Northern Ireland

Organisational Background
Northern Ireland is a very complex political environment and was unlike any of the other locations I visited during my Fellowship. Rather than dealing with individuals or groups involved in sectarian violence (for political reasons it is not referred to as violent extremism), Northern Ireland’s historic and deep seated ethno-nationalist issues has divided its community largely into Loyalist and Republican areas. By way of example, schools are still mainly segregated which instills a sense of division from an early age.

Charter Northern Ireland (CNI) was established in 2000 to reintegrate former Loyalist prisoners involved in sectarian violence back into their community and provide support to their families. Since that time, CNI has evolved significantly into an organisation that seeks to sustain peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and now has the stated mission to:

“Enable, equip and empower disconnected Protestant working-class communities...to fully engage, integrate and benefit from the Northern Ireland Peace Process and the resulting social and economical regeneration” (CNI, 2015).

CNI has three strategic aims:
- Employment and Training
- Youth
- Community Safety and Cohesion

The Chief Executive (CE) of CNI is David (Dee) Stitts. Dee was born into a Loyalist family and grew up in Belfast during a period referred to as the “Troubles” (1969-1997). Dee followed in his Father’s footsteps and became active in the Loyalist paramilitary movement during his youth which resulted in a number of his friends being killed, him being injured and led to two significant terms of imprisonment. A confluence of events led to Dee’s cognitive opening and connection to CNI. With a new outlook on life, Dee completed his schooling and went on to complete a Diploma of Community Safety. He eventually assumed the role of CE, CNI.

Key Findings
1. A bottom up approach. All of CNI’s programs are influenced and driven by the needs and/or wants of their local community. In fact, CNI views itself as being accountable to its community members and aims to empower people at a local level.

2. Being accessible by having CNI offices located within its area of operation (East Belfast) and regularly consulting with their local community. Most of CNI’s 23 workers were raised or live in the near vicinity.

3. Appropriate environmental images positively affect the psyche of the community therefore CNI, with the consent of their community, are reimagining many of the paramilitary murals which venerate paramilitary values and victories with more positive images e.g. Loyalist sporting heroes or positive historical events.
4. **Using formers** to send clear messages of the negative impacts of sectarian violence such as imprisonment, dysfunctional family life and/or wasted energies. CNI seeks to show people positive avenues to bring about change rather than negative ones. One example is their Prison to Peace (P2P) program which is now part of the school curriculum for 14 – 16 year olds. The P2P schoolbook resource uses formers to present the opposing views (Loyalist/Republican) in a balanced manner and highlight the negative experiences of that violent lifestyle.

5. **Bespoke programs** to address an individual’s deprivation e.g. employment, training, health or addictions which are based on a thorough assessment of their antecedents, aims and aspirations. CNI heavily promote education, training and development for its clients.

6. **Building relationships through harmonisation** is achieved through several of CNI’s programs which seek to bridge the Loyalist/Republican divide by highlighting the parallels, similarities and human aspects of each group and dispel myths of one sector being given greater opportunity or advantage than the other.

7. **Focus on the youth** to break the generational radicalisation into sectarian violence. CNI’s youth programs focus on addressing social deprivations e.g. employment, health and education as well as leadership, empowerment and social cohesion. CNI use trained local young adults to engage with youths in their community to identify those suitable for intervention and maintain communication.

8. **Maintain strategic partnerships** with various government and non-government agencies to assess their resources, skills and expertise in tackling violent extremism. CNI and its partners present a united front on sectarian violence, however, CNI is not an intelligence gathering platform for government agencies but it will report individuals who represent an imminent and serious threat to another.
Police Service of Northern Ireland

Organisational Background
The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) policed Northern Ireland between 1922 and 2001. By 1983 the RUC had attained the unenviable title of being the most dangerous police force in the world to serve in. In 1998 the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland was established and ultimately made a number of recommendations, including:

- Renaming the RUC the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- Creating a Police Ombudsman and Complaint Tribunal
- Removing symbols of ‘Britishness’ from the PSNI
- Establishing a 50/50 (Catholic/Protestant) recruitment policy
- Emphasising community policing and normalisation

Whilst the situation in Belfast and with the PSNI has improved significantly over time, there are still considerable challenges for the PSNI in terms of community trust, confidence and support.

Despite Belfast being part of the United Kingdom, the national counter-terrorism strategy known as Contest (which incorporates a prevent aspect) is not utilised due to political reasons.

Key Findings
1. Intervention programs must be viewed as legitimate and trustworthy to retain the confidence of the community and ensure the vital flow of information between the community and police. Once this confidence is lost, members of the community will not report suspicious/criminal behaviour that then causes it to grow within the community. Intervention programs must be transparent and accountable with sound governance practices. Collaboration and joint problem solving between police and community is essential.

2. Don’t allow violence to be normalised by the community as it becomes extremely difficult to eradicate and can become a generational legacy.

3. Intervention programs should explore historical factors in a balanced manner that radicalisers have simplified or distorted to suit their needs. Inclusion of good and bad aspects from each side is crucial as is an identification of a way forward.

4. Intervention programs should demonstrate parallels between communities not differences and actively work to dispel myths promulgated by radicalisers. Police should work collaboratively with community members, groups and organisation pursuing similar goals as peer-to-peer messaging is very powerful.

5. Language is extremely important and authorities need to be extremely mindful on how they explain or discuss issues or inform their community through public messaging.
Police Services

Organisational Background
Due to the similarities in approach between the London Metropolitan Police, Ontario Provincial Police, Toronto Police Service, Calgary Police Service and the Integrated National Security Enforcement Team, their findings have been consolidated.

Key Findings
1. Police cannot simply ‘arrest their way out’ of these complex issues and the answer lies in collaboration with the community. The conflict is an adaptive challenge meaning the root cause is sometimes difficult to identify, change requires an alteration in beliefs, mindset and values and solutions will require experimentation. Applying a technical solution i.e. applying existing legislation (making arrests) or creating new legislation will never solve the issue.

2. Intervention programs should be marketed as preventing violent extremism not countering violent extremism as this is what law enforcement and security agencies do. This was quite a profound point and one which reinforces how language is crucial when working in the VE space. This small but important change in verbiage may reduce resistance to intervention programs through the ‘softening’ of language and reframing mindsets about the intent of the program and how participants are viewed.

3. Trust, credibility and legitimacy of intervention programs and its providers is essential to ensure members of the community and frontline service workers feel comfortable referring people for intervention.

4. Make and market violent extremism intervention programs for all forms of violent extremism and avoid focusing on one form of violent extremism as it will likely cause that segment of the community to be isolated, discriminated and victimised.

5. Let your community shape and influence the intervention program through engagement and consultation. Don’t tell your community what they need, particularly those segments most affected by violent extremism.

6. Participation in any intervention programs must be voluntary as forced participation is highly unlikely to ameliorate the radicalisation due to their lack of cognitive opening thus an inability to reflect on their deeply seated VE beliefs and values.

7. Devise programs which educate the community and frontline service workers of the indicators of radicalisation as these people will act as sentinels for those ‘at-risk’ of or engaged in a violent extremism ideology. Don’t make the information on the indicators too prescriptive as people will rely too heavily on this and diminish their own structured professional judgment/common sense.

8. An ‘at-risk’ individual does not necessarily require a report to police or intelligence agencies as low-threat individuals can appropriately be dealt with via existing internal structures e.g. school psychologist or an employee assistance program. Those individuals representing a medium to high risk must be reported immediately to police/intelligence agencies.
9. **Intervention programs must reconnect the individual back to their pre-radicalisation social and community networks.** Radicalisation draws people from their moderate social and community networks into tight knit groups of like-minded extremists. Reconnecting individuals to their pre-radicalisation networks eliminates the ‘us and them’ mindset.

10. **Members of an individual’s social structures (family, friends, employer etc.) are valuable** in terms of identifying early changes in behaviour as they radicalise, assist administer intervention strategies and influence the radicalised/ing individual's mindset. These people need to be well supported and guided.

11. **Intervention programs are not an alternative to the judicial system.** Those identified as committing criminal acts must be progressed through the judicial system. Intervention programs are specifically for de-escalating an individual’s willingness to engage in violence extremism.

12. **Develop professional working relationships with sectors and institutions where there is an increased risk of radicalisation** to ensure open lines of communication and trust, legitimacy and credibility is established e.g. marginalised sectors of the community, prisons, places of worship and learning institutes.

13. **Multi-agency panels (MAP) of senior frontline human service workers** are the most effective way to ensure the identified individual has access to the full range of services provided by authorities to address radicalised/ing individuals. The general structure of these MAPs are:

13a) A Strategic Advisory Group consisting of executives from the various human services to shape, guide and inform the MAP.

13b) MAPs consist of senior managers of key human services, such as police, health, education. The MAP retains the authority to second in other human services managers as appropriate to the matter before them e.g. housing.

13c) Some MAPs were legislated which puts an attendance obligation upon them, such as S. 36 – 41 Counter Terrorism & Safety Act (UK) which sets out the Local Authority as the Channel Panel (CP) Chair and identifies its members e.g. police, health etc. (CPs are part of the Prevent stream with the Contest strategy).

13d) All radicalised/ing individuals are voluntary and their information is deconflicted with other law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

13e) Cases before the MAP have the radicalised/ing individual’s information de-identified (names, addresses, dates of birth removed) to protect their privacy and give credibility to the process. The MAP determines if the radicalised/ing individual reaches an acutely elevated risk (AER) threshold. If not, those cases are signposted out to other community groups that can assist.

13f) Once the AER threshold is reached, the MAP agrees upon which agencies from within their membership are best suited to deal with the case and form a multi-agency team (MAT). The MAT receives the radicalised/ing individual identifying particulars and causes a comprehensive assessment of the radicalised/ing individual to be undertaken. The MAT then determine appropriate intervention strategies.
13g) The MAT have access to specialised service providers that they can call upon as cases dictate e.g. psychologist.

13h) A secure, computerised case management system independent to other government systems ensures information integrity.

13i) Child welfare services are advised of all children coming before the MAP.

14. **Information sharing** should be done with the consent of the identified individual or in accordance with legislation where that cannot be obtained.

15. **Comprehensive risk assessments** are vital and should be an evolutionary document throughout the life of the intervention. Many agencies are using VERA2 (discussed earlier) or adaptations of it.

16. **An appropriate screening process** which filters out individuals who are ineligible or unsuitable is paramount to ensure the finite intervention resources are optimised. The Ontario Provincial Police use a four filter approach:

   16a) **Filter One** – Completed at agency level prior to nomination for multi-agency intervention consideration. This will have determined the individual’s risk factors are beyond the scope and mandate of that organisation to mitigate and other inter-agency approaches have been exhausted.

   16b) **Filter Two** – In a de-identified format, the agency presents the information to the multi-jurisdictional panel to enable a collective decision on whether the case meets the parameters of ‘acutely elevated risk factors’.

   16c) **Filter Three** – Case is deemed to reach the ‘acutely elevated risk factors’ threshold therefore limited personal information is divulged to enable suitable discussion to be had on who should be part of the discussion and intervention.

   16d) **Filter Four** – Identified agencies will meet privately to discuss personal information that needs to be divulged to identify solutions to address the acutely elevated risk factors. Discussions are limited to personal information deemed necessary to assess the situation and the appropriate action. (OPP, n.d.)

17. **Intervention programs must devise graduated exit strategies** for themselves and any other services provided based upon the successful diversion/disengagement of the individual.

18. **Build networks of credible messengers** throughout communities and organisations to spread positive messages. Many locations have only a few of these messengers and they tend to become fatigued through over use. Having messengers of varying backgrounds deepens the message and demonstrates it isn’t just government propaganda.

19. **Community liaison teams** were present in all police managed intervention programs and were tasked to interface with the community. They also included units which delivered training on radicalisation indicators to community members and frontline service workers.
Conclusion

The intervention programs I examined varied slightly to cater for differing political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) conditions. Some had distinct points of difference e.g. HCFS focuses on supporting family and friends and Exit Fryshuset focuses on former VE assisting current VE. A successful intervention program would be founded on those elements common amongst all the programs and consider inclusion of those points of difference which are congruent with their specific PESTLE conditions.

The requirement to undertake a thorough assessment of a radicalised/ing individual is a fundamental and crucial activity. A detailed appreciation of certain factors, such as the individual’s antecedents, deprivations, social structures, motivators and support networks serve as a solid platform to identify and treat risks and determine intervention strategies. By having this in-depth understanding of the individual, strategies which create or further a cognitive opening within the individual’s mind and causes them to apply critical and reflective thinking skills to their choices is key to addressing their radicalisation.

An important point identified by all the intervention specialists was that individuals who represent a significant risk to community safety and security must be reported forthwith to law enforcement or intelligence agencies. Preferably this would be done by the individual’s family/friends, however, should they fail to do so, all providers understood the necessity to make that report themselves. Those individuals who represent a low risk can be referred to structures already existing in their life that can adequately assist them, such as an employee assistance program or community programs. This ensures that finite intervention resources are able to be targeted at medium to high risk individuals. Regardless of the individual’s risk level, the social aspect of radicalisation must be countered through connecting the radicalised/ing individual back to their moderate community and pre-radicalisation social structures.

Another fundamental requirement is high levels of community confidence and trust in the program, especially those segments of the community most likely to be affected by it. It is the community members associated with the radicalised/ing individual who will most readily identify behavioural changes within the individual. If these people don’t have confidence and trust in the intervention program, reporting of radicalised/ing individuals will not be forthcoming, early intervention will not occur and the opportunity to prevent an attack will be lost. Ideally this would be supported by a communication campaign which informs community members and frontline service workers of the indicators of radicalisation. These indicators must not be overly prescriptive, as it will merely become a ‘checklist’ and diminish the importance of the assessor’s structured professional judgment.

Radicalisation into a VE ideology is undoubtedly an adaptive challenge and as such, the application of technical solutions (e.g. applying existing or new legislation) will not ameliorate the situation. This adaptive challenge requires new levels of collaboration between government, non-government, academia and the community to harness the resources, information and expertise of the collective. What became evident during my travels was that multi-agency panels worked more effectively in locations where every member of that panel understood their role, responsibilities and contributions in the intervention process rather those that appeared to be unaware of the important part they played.
Recommendations

- Intervention programs should be voluntary.
- Intervention programs should respect individual, human and civil rights.
- Intervention programs should be shaped through community consultation.
- Intervention programs should be marketed/framed as preventing violent extremism, not countering violent extremism.
- Intervention programs should be clearly delineated from all other law enforcement and intelligence gathering activities.
- Intervention programs should have an equal focus on upstream diversion of ‘at-risk’ individuals and downstream assistance to VEs seeking to exit from their group.
- Strategies should be implemented which legitimise the program and engender community trust and confidence such as:
  - Communities to be consulted and informed – particularly affected segments
  - Communication that the program caters for all forms of violent extremism
  - Marketing which eliminates any stigma of being associated with the program
  - Communication of the program’s intent, processes and governance arrangements
  - Transparent complaint mechanism for the program
  - Provision of an assistance/enquiry telephone number
  - Public annual reporting on program outcomes using de-identified information/metrics
- The indicators of radicalisation should be communicated to the public and frontline service workers, however, they should not be overly prescriptive as it will create a dependency upon fulfilling them and minimise the application of the assessor’s own judgment.
- Intervention programs should only deal with individuals presenting an acutely elevated risk which is defined as “situations deemed, through a variety of criteria and perspectives, from a variety of agencies, organisations and individuals, to merit risk intervention because of high probability that they will become emergencies involving social disorder, crime of victimisation” (Toronto Police, n.d.).
- For individuals who don’t reach the AER threshold, they should be signposted to existing organisational structures to address low-risk radicalisation cases e.g. schools may use their school psychologists. Medium and high-risk cases must be referred to authorities.
• Intervention strategies should:
  o Create (or further) a cognitive opening in the individual
  o Mitigate risks by continually building upon and referring to the individual’s in-depth assessment
  o Address any deprivations (e.g. employment)
  o Connect the individual to their pre-radicalisation social structures
  o Connect the individual to appropriate community groups
  o Employ the services of specialist providers as required (e.g. mentor)
  o Support the family and friends of the radicalised/ing individual and leverage of their existing relationship
  o Seek peaceful and lawful alternate means to support the PRI cause (if appropriate) e.g. fund raising for recognised humanitarian services in Syria
  o Provide safe and controlled environments for facilitated group discussions on an extremist ideology which encourage critical thinking and reflection
Proposed Intervention Structure

**Strategic Advisory Group**
Consisting of human service executives, academics and secular community members to shape, direct and oversight the activities of the intervention program.

**Referral received** (from any source and for any form of violent extremism)

**Referral deconflicted** with law enforcement (LE) and Intelligence agencies (IA)

**Multi-Agency Panel (MAP)**
To assess acutely elevated risk (AER) threshold based upon an interim assessment of the individual

- **Referral does** meet AER threshold. **Multi-Agency Team (MAT)** is formed from within the MAP membership from those agencies identified as best suited to deal with the particular case.
- **Referral does not** meet AER threshold

**Nominated person:**
Receives a tailored intervention program based on risk assessment and an Intervention Manager assigned:
- Bespoke intervention to address any deprivations e.g. health/housing/employment/financial advice etc.
- Specialised services as required (e.g. psychiatrist / mentor / religious guidance / relationship counselling / former extremist)
- Connected to an appropriate community/sporting group
- Connected to pre-radicalisation moderate social structures
- Subject to ongoing risk assessments

**Family/friends of referred person** are provided advice / support / guidance / mentoring / support by their Intervention Manager.

Monthly progress reports to the MAP via the MAT.

Should circumstances deteriorate, refer back to MAP for consideration of a LE/IA referral.

**Nominated person:**
Connected to assistance within their existing structures which can assist with the radicalisation e.g. school psychologist or employee assistance program

**Family/friends of referred person** are provided advice/guidance/mentoring/support on how to assist the individual via a contact telephone service.

Follow up every 3 months until issues are satisfactorily ameliorated.

Should circumstances deteriorate, refer back to MAP for consideration of a LE/IA referral.

**Intervention stopped** and only progressed when approved by interested LE/IA

**Intervention progressed** with LE/IA approval
References


