

Barcelona Summer School



Risk assessment

Why is risk assessment important ???

- Discussion

Why is risk assessment important

- To predict the level of intervention
- To identify the risk and protective factors – targets and resources of interventions
- To identify the high risk offenders – classifications, special measures etc.

VERA 2 & ERG 22+

ERG-22+ Record sheet

ENGAGEMENT		Presence of Factor				Omit
		Not Present	Partly Present	Strongly Present	Protection	
1.	Need to redress injustice					
2.	Need to defend against threats					
3.	Identity, meaning & belonging					
4.	Need for status					
5.	Excitement, comradeship & adventure					
6.	Need to Dominate others					
7.	Susceptibility to indoctrination					
8.	Political, moral motivation					
9.	Opportunistic involvement					
10.	Family and/or friends support extremism					
11.	Transitional periods					
12.	Group Influence and Control					
13.	Mental Health Issues					
	Any Other Factor Specify					
Overall rating for Engagement		Low	Medium	High		
INTENT		Not Present	Partly Present	Strongly Present	Protection	Omit
14.	Over-identification with group, cause					
15.	Us & Them thinking					
16.	Dehumanisation of the enemy					
17.	Attitudes that justify offending					
18.	Harmful means to an end					
19.	Harmful end objectives					
	Any Other Factor Specify					
Overall rating for Intent		Low	Medium	High		
CAPABILITY		Minimal	Some	Significant		Omit
20.	Personal knowledge, skills, competencies					
21.	Access to networks, funding, equipment					
22.	Criminal history					
Overall rating for Capability		Minimal	Some	Significant		

VERA

VIOLENT EXTREMISM RISK ASSESSMENT

For the Summer School Barcelona
Working Rating Form
 Pressman and Flockton
 2010

	Items	Low	Moderate	High
BA.	BELIEFS & ATTITUDES			
BA.1	Commitment to ideology justifying violence			
BA.2	Victim of injustice and grievances (personal or group)			
BA.3	Dehumanization/demonization of identified targets of injustice			
BA.4	Rejection of democratic society and values			
BA.5	Feelings of hate, frustration, persecution and/or alienation			

Main tools

Features	VERA 2	ERG 22+
Initiators	Pressman and Flockton (Canada)	Lloyd and Dean (NOMS UK)
Story	In 2009 as a guide together with experts and clinicians based on previous literature – many versions	In 2014 – based on the literature, casework but also interviews with real offenders (50) and feedback from PO (35)
Available	In English and French – for sale	English (tested only in Minnesota outside UK)
Structure (almost similar)	5 parts: ideology (attitudes), context-intent, commitment and motivation, history and capability and protective items.	3 dimensions: engagement, intent and capability Simpler
Tested	Mostly clinically on 5 terrorists	Clinically if easy to use
Aim	To evaluate risk, inform treatment and support disengagement	To manage risk

Main tools

Features	VERA 2	ERG 22+
Who could use it?	Previous training advised	Forensic psychologists of experienced POs – in pairs
Similarities	Contain also situational factors Contain also items regarding grievance of injustice Both include items such as antisocial traits	Such as network, ties ... Such as hyper-masculinity, sensation seeking etc.
Main differences	Ideology Includes protective factors – 6 Almost actuarial	Identity Clinical – case formulation
Missing in both	Cognitive inflexibility	E.g. authoritarian thoughts

Other tools & New developments

- **IR46** – used in The Netherlands by Haaglanden Regional Safety House – two columns (ideologies and social context) – 46 items – multi-agency risk assessment
- **TRAP-18** – combines proximal warning behaviors (identification, fixation) and 10 longer term distal characteristics (grievance, ideology), especially useful for lone-actors.
- Ministry of Justice in The Netherlands is creating an European databases with terrorists to create an European VERA

Case study

- In two groups – one using ERG 22 and one VERA 2
- 30 minutes
- Questions:
 - What is the level of risk of extremist violence ?
 - How was the experience of using the tools?
 - What are the learning points?

Case study

Reporting back to the group !!

5 minutes each group

Learning points

- Risk assessment tools are essential in structuring the assessment process,
- They require further validation on different populations and different cultural contexts
- They require training for proper use and copyright
- They should be used together with other assessment tools – e.g. OaSys, LSI etc.
- They require sometimes access to non-open source data – e.g. asses the capability
- They should be connected to interventions

Limits !!!!

- These tools were developed based on a small number of subjects – statistically difficult
- They were developed in the Western countries – not sure how well they travel (VERA seems more adaptable)
- They should be used as structuring the assessment process rather than actuarial tools

Questions ?

Thanks.