DRIVERS OF RADICALIZATION TO VIOLENCE

IDEOLOGICAL
PERSONAL
SOCIOPOLITICAL
GROUP
COMMUNITY

No single factor leads to radicalization
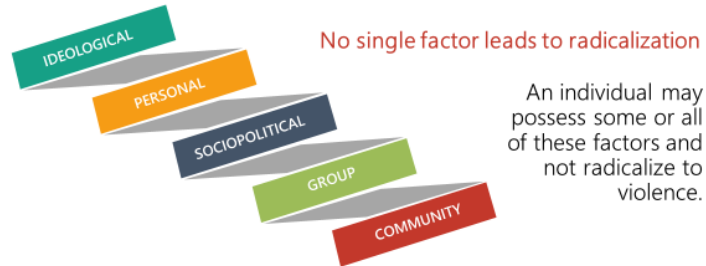
An individual may possess some or all of these factors and not radicalize to violence.

Why would someone want to join a violent extremist movement or group? Here it is important to remember that the factors that cause someone to sympathize with or join a violent extremist movement are unique to the individual, not linear, and often not limited to one factor or condition.

- Radicalization to violence can be caused by both positive and negative factors, for instance a desire to belong, to support a group, to make a difference, or adventure. Negative factors can include marginalization, revenge, and sometimes, mental health. Some factors can be both positive and negative, for instance, the role of family.
- While there is no common pathway to violent extremism, what we have found is that it is often fueled by real or perceived grievances.
- In general, we can group the drivers into 5 buckets: ideological, personal, sociopolitical, group, and community factors. No single factor accounts for why one individual radicalizes while another does not.

1) Ideological factors – Think about this as an individual's moral compass.
Ideology provides individuals with an interpretive framework for the world and life events, as well as a set of values, beliefs, and goals for a movement or social entity. It also establishes the rationale for individual and collective action.

- This is often present at some point in the radicalization to violence process but, contrary to the common belief, it is *not always* a main driver or may occur later in the process.

2) Personal factors – These are things that might make a person likely to be influenced by other narratives including violent extremist narratives. These factors can include:

- Personal needs: such as a need for belonging and purpose.
- Personal context: including anxiety, frustration, humiliation, desire for revenge, mental health.
- Triggering personal events: such as losing a job or relationship, or real or perceived discrimination.

3) <u>Sociopolitical factors</u> – Political and societal level conditions, events, and grievances—both local and global—can help drive an individual to seek a new ideological perspective. Sociopolitical factors include:

- Broad common grievances; such as frustrations with foreign policy or political and economic situations.
- Perceived aggression against or oppression of an ethnic group to which the individual belongs or identifies with, even if they have not experienced this oppression themselves.
- Perceived economic exploitation.
- Perceived attack on personal values or interests.

4) <u>Group factors</u> – Groups can include in-person groups and groups found on social media. Group dynamics consist of:

- Emphasizing a collective identity.
- Creating an echo chamber.
- Dehumanizing opponents.

5) <u>Community factors</u> – When grievances, both real and perceived, are combined with insularity, isolation, and a lack of trust in societal and political institutions, they can create the conditions that encourage a group to support a violent ideology. Community factors can include:

- Religious discrimination;
- Tensions with law enforcement;
- Weak civil society and mistrust of government;
- Insularity and isolation.

Why is it important to understand this process?

- We have seen nationwide that often many of these people exhibited behavioral changes uncharacteristic for that individual—witnessed primarily by family or peers—but this concerning behavior often went unreported to authorities.
  - Failure to intervene or report was often due to a lack of knowledge about what people were observing or a lack of trust in law enforcement.
- There is always a window of opportunity to intervene and protect these individuals before it's too late.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:
(1) No single factor leads to radicalization
(2) Most people who radicalize do not mobilize
(3) A person may have some or all of these factors and not become violent
(4) Therefore, there is no profile of an individual who will radicalize or mobilize

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