



*Prevention first*

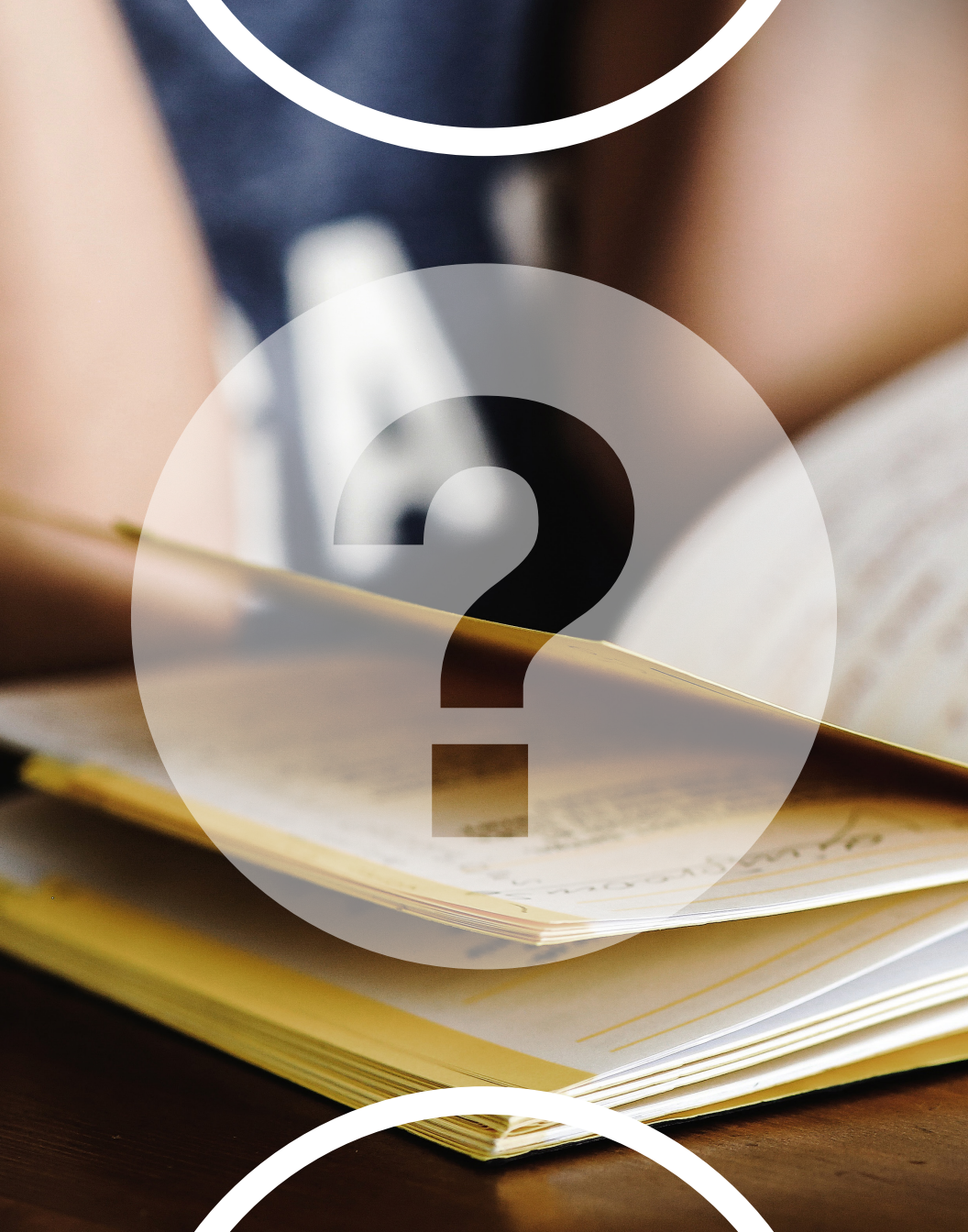
INFORMATION KIT FOR  
SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Radicalization leading to  
violence in schools:

a better understanding for a better response



CENTRE FOR THE PREVENTION  
OF RADICALIZATION  
LEADING TO VIOLENCE





## WHAT IS RADICALIZATION LEADING TO VIOLENCE?

Radicalization leading to violence is a process through which people adopt extremist belief systems—including the willingness to use, encourage or facilitate violence—designed to promote an ideology, political project or cause as a means of social transformation.



WHAT BEHAVIOURS MAY BE SIGNS  
THAT A PERSON IS UNDERGOING A  
**PROCESS OF RADICALIZATION**  
**LEADING TO VIOLENCE?**

While certain behaviours may be good indicators of radicalization, it is important to point out that there is no standard profile for individuals undergoing radicalization, or factor that is linked exclusively to this phenomenon. Every case of radicalization is unique and is shaped by the individual's particular context and environment. However, some changes in behaviour may appear to indicate that a student is becoming radicalized and that, as a result, the student's wellbeing and safety along with the safety of the community may be at risk. Such changes must be taken seriously; it is important that you seek help or advice from professionals able to provide you with appropriate support in dealing with such a complex and delicate situation.

### Behaviours that may be linked to a process of violent radicalization include:

- Abrupt or unexplained loss of interest for school or athletic activities.
- Sudden withdrawal and refusal to participate in school activities or extracurricular events that used to be highly appreciated by the individual.
- Recurrent absenteeism due to absolute devotion to an ideology or cause.
- Sudden interest in weapons.
- Categorical rejection of cultural or artistic phenomena considered to be in conflict with the individual's world view.
- Expression of a strong sense of victimization or stigmatization.
- Becoming highly susceptible due to certain beliefs, and refusing to engage in any form of dialogue with others who do not share the same dogma.
- Refusal (in class, during activities, at mealtimes) to be near another student due to the latter's origin, skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, or religion.

- Systematically challenging certain teachings or topics (especially in History, Life and Earth Sciences, and Ethics and Religious Culture) because they are contrary to the student's personal beliefs or those of the group to which the student belongs.
- Adoption of a hateful (xenophobic, anti-Semitic, homophobic, anti-Muslim, misogynist, etc.) discourse that does not allow for any attempts at dialogue.
- Dissimulating one's beliefs, and religious or ideological practices by presenting a false front to friends and family.
- Engaging in excessive ideological or religious preaching at school or via social media with other students.
- Showing strong support for conspiracy discourses vis-a-vis the adult world, institutions and the State.
- Use of technological (or other) devices provided by the school or its staff to promote a cause or violent ideology.
- Regularly visiting radical or violent extremist websites.
- Participating in radical groups or think tanks.



**While it is important to watch out for behaviour changes such as those described above, it is also important not to jump to conclusions.**

**The presence of a single such behaviour is not sufficient cause for concern: only when several such behaviours are observed should school and education professionals become more vigilant.**



HOW SHOULD ONE  
INTERVENE IN CASES OF  
**VIOLENT RADICALIZATION?**

When dealing with radicalization, it is important to take into account how vulnerable young people may be and to adopt a compassionate approach offering a helping hand. This is why it is important that when school personnel notice changes in a student's behaviours, care is taken not to intervene in such a way as to make the situation worse or to unfairly stigmatize the student.

### Here are some things you can do if you think a student is becoming radicalized:

- As hard as it may be, try to remain calm and not to overreact to any resistance you may encounter: communication and trust are your key tools in creating a neutral and tolerant climate for dialogue with the student.
- Be careful to ensure your intervention does not create paranoia or suspicion in the classroom or school that might cause the student to be stigmatized or ostracized.
- Even if you only have suspicions, consult the resources available to you through the school system and use the expertise of your school's personnel to help you develop a better understanding the situation; be sure to respect confidentiality guidelines.
- If you consider it appropriate, contact the student's parents. They are important eyewitnesses who can provide you with information on their child's frame of reference, environment, possible issues, and any sources of distress unknown to the school. This will help you to gauge the student's situation outside of school and the possible extent of any radicalization, real or suspected.
- Be attentive to any revelations by schoolmates about sudden changes on social media, especially if hate speech is involved or if the student is visiting websites advocating violent extremist discourses or groups.
- Note observations made by other resources (internal or external) regarding changes in the student outside of school (e.g. affecting athletic or community activities).

- Beware of the danger of confusing possible violent radicalization with more common adolescent behaviours: young people often display provocative behaviours without necessarily undergoing radicalization.
- In keeping with your professional code of conduct, avoid excluding the student and instead try to preserve the student's relationship with the school. Invite school staff to develop a bond with the student and the latter's parents and to work with them.
- To be more effective, know and respect your limits so you do not say or do anything that might make matters worse.



**Violent radicalization is a complex phenomenon whose origins are sometimes surprising. The professionals at the CPRLV make up a multidisciplinary team able to provide you with support, advice and coaching based on your situation and needs. If you have the slightest doubt about a possible case of radicalization, or if you have concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us in complete confidence.**

A young man with dark hair, wearing a grey hoodie and a black and white striped sock, is sitting at a desk. He is resting his head on his right hand, looking down at an open book. In the background, two other students are visible, but they are out of focus. The overall scene is a classroom or library setting.

# WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT RADICALIZATION LEADING TO VIOLENCE IN MY SCHOOL?

School personnel play a key role in any prevention strategy as they know their students and are therefore in a position to note, on a daily basis, any changes in behaviour or the adoption of stances that may be indicative of radicalization. Any school-based action or activities aimed at preventing violent radicalization must be consistent with the **Anti-Bullying and Anti-Violence Plan**. We also recommend that you consult the documentation produced by the ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur on the role of schools and school personnel in the prevention of radicalization leading to violence.

Keeping in mind that this is a continuous process, here are examples of the types of action you might take to help prevent radicalization from occurring in your school:

- Increase your theoretical and practical knowledge of radicalization leading to violence in schools.
- Provide students with forums for discussion during educational activities to permit them to discuss societal issues, current affairs, and everyday concerns that directly affect them.
- Encourage inclusive dialogue that is respectful of everyone's beliefs (those of your students as well as those of staff members).
- Use collective mediation strategies when tensions arise.
- Encourage activities designed to celebrate pluralism as well as social and ethno-cultural diversity.
- Develop students' critical thinking skills and media and information literacy to help them to recognize the dangers of social media and the Internet.
- Build students' resilience to hate speech and to strategies for indoctrinating or manipulating.

- Celebrate civic and humanitarian engagement through educational and extracurricular activities.
- Raise your awareness of the fact that the prevention of radicalization leading to violence must take place before students drop out of school.
- Avoid exclusion (or the perception of exclusion) and the development of feelings of injustice and victimization in students.



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**IF YOU FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF A STUDENT OR ANY  
OTHER PERSON, CALL 911.**

**IF YOU SUSPECT A CASE OF RADICALIZATION AND WOULD  
LIKE TO RECEIVE SUPPORT, CALL THE CPRLV.**

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## What happens if I contact the centre?

A specialist from the CPRLV will call you back within 24 to 48 hours. The specialist will talk to you about your concerns and needs regarding the situation, schedule a meeting if you would like one, and set up an intervention plan if appropriate.





## WHO ARE WE?

The CPRLV is a non-profit organization not affiliated with any government services. The Centre's goal is to prevent acts of violence linked to radicalization, as well as to support organizations, individuals, families and friends affected by this reality. The CPRLV provides prevention, intervention and training programs to help you to deal with any situation involving radicalization, and to provide you with the necessary support whatever your needs.



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## **24/7 HELPLINE**

Montréal area: 514 687-7141  
Elsewhere in Québec : 1 877 687-7141

**IT'S CONFIDENTIAL!**

[info-radical.org](http://info-radical.org)