

A SUPPORT AND AWARENESS TOOL

As is the case with many social phenomena (such as suicide and abuse), radicalization leading to violence can be identified by a series of signs. For the general public, as well as for frontline workers (including teachers, social workers and police officers), it is important to be able to recognize situations of radicalization leading to violence in order to adopt an appropriate preventive response. To this end, the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence (CPRLV) has created the “Behaviour Barometer”, a support and awareness tool to help identify behaviour potentially associated with a situation of radicalization.

The “Behaviour Barometer” is based on scientific knowledge and the CPRLV’s experience handling actual situations of radicalization. Combining information from both sources made it possible to draw up a list of behaviours usually observed in cases of radicalization leading to violence that everyone should learn to recognize. Given that a certain degree of confusion surrounds phenomena of radicalization leading to violence, the “Behaviour Barometer” serves to clarify the most important behavioural indicators involved. Some behaviours and actions can, in fact,

be wrongly interpreted as signs of radicalization. For both the general public and professional stakeholders, what matters is the ability to recognize which indicators are actually associated with the phenomenon and to consider a person’s behaviour globally to understand a particular situation.

The Barometer is divided into four (4) categories of behaviour based on the degree of seriousness: insignificant, troubling, worrisome and alarming. The advantage of this system is that it provides a quick and simple visual representation of behaviours while helping raise awareness of those behaviours that are significant indicators of radicalization. Some behaviours may seem serious when they are not, in fact, signs of radicalization (for example, expressing one’s identity through certain visual signs is considered an insignificant behaviour). On the other hand, strong indicators that radicalization is taking place may tend to be trivialized or misunderstood. This is the case when a person starts making dehumanizing comments about other groups, a behaviour that should be considered worrisome.

ADVICE ON PROPER USE OF THE BAROMETER



The Barometer is designed as a teaching tool and must not be treated as a comprehensive radicalization screening or detection tool. It is intended primarily to help persons concerned about a loved one watch for and identify behaviours associated with radicalization leading to violence.



Anyone wishing to use the CPRLV Barometer should know that not all behaviours of a single individual will generally fall under the same category on the Barometer, but may instead fall under a combination of categories. It is therefore important that the Barometer is not used to carry out a solely quantitative assessment of behaviours (i.e. determining the category containing the greatest number of observed behaviours). Rather, it should assist in making a qualitative assessment (examining which behaviours are most significant in the individual’s overall behaviour).



It is always important to keep in mind the fact that some behaviours mentioned in the Barometer may, when examined independently, prove to be the result of other issues unrelated to radicalization, such as mental health problems or an adolescent oppositional disorder. For this reason, the observation of behaviours associated with radicalization must be conducted in the context of a global assessment in order to rule out any other explanations for such behaviours.



The Barometer is not a clinical assessment instrument: it must never be used to diagnose an individual situation. Rather it is intended to be a support and awareness tool to guide the user in forming an initial understanding of a potential situation of radicalization. For a more complete assessment of a potential situation of radicalization, we recommend getting in touch with the professionals at the CPRLV, who can conduct a thorough analysis of the situation and, if necessary, determine possible avenues of intervention.

**24/7
HELPLINE**

Montreal area: 514 687-7141
Elsewhere in Quebec: 1 877 687-7141
It’s confidential!

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BEHAVIOUR BAROMETER

How to recognize radicalization
behaviours **leading to violence**



NON-SIGNIFICANT

BEHAVIOUR

This category includes a series of behaviours associated with diverse forms of political, religious or community engagement, characterized by peaceful actions and democratic means of expression.

- Argues fervently to defend his/her convictions before family members and/or close friends
- Adopts visible signs (traditional clothes, beard, shaved head, religious symbols, specific tattoos, etc.) to express their identity or sense of belonging
- Is active on social media
- Takes a stand and advocates peacefully for a cause related to a community, group, or individual
- Takes a keen interest in current national and/or international events
- Expresses the desire to re-engage, or increase involvement in a religious practice, political movement or other personal identity-related activity
- Converts to or adopts new religious, ideological or political beliefs
- Insists on following specific dietary requirements due to political or religious convictions
- Expresses a need for excitement or adventure
- Wishes to address social injustices



CONCERNING

BEHAVIOUR

This category comprises behaviours that point to personal ill-being, including behaviours indicating a growing identification with a cause or ideology (arising from issues around a sense of self-worth), resulting in major behavioural changes.

- Expresses polarizing views of absolute truth, paranoia or extreme mistrust
- Suddenly adopts behaviour that creates a rupture with family practices
- Is drawn to conspiracy theories and discourse
- Pulls away from those who are close and from the usual network of acquaintances
- Suddenly changes his/her habits
- Feels a strong sense of victimization and rejection suffered because of their own identity or beliefs
- Rejects the rules and regulations of institutions and organizations with which they are in contact (school, workplace, athletic organizations, etc.) based on ideological, political or religious grounds
- Refuses to take part in group activities or to interact with certain individuals because of their religion, ethnic group, skin colour, gender or sexual orientation
- Expresses a need to dominate or control others in the name of certain beliefs or an ideological view
- Has difficulty reassessing their own opinions and recognizing the value of differing points of view



TROUBLING

BEHAVIOUR

This category encompasses behaviours that can be associated with the beginning of an individual's radical trajectory. It is characterized by an acute mistrust of the outside world, and by a preponderance of views legitimizing the use of violence to achieve one's goals, or to advance one's cause.

- Cuts off ties with family members and close friends in order to keep exclusive company with a new circle of acquaintances or friends because of irreconcilable or extremist beliefs
- Legitimizes or defends the use of violence as legitimate in the service of a cause or an ideology
- Hides a new lifestyle, allegiance or belief system from family members and/or close friends (either online or in real life)
- Draws closer to radicalized individuals or groups known to be extremist
- Becomes suddenly disinterested in professional or school activities
- Displays symbols of affiliation or support associated with recognized violent extremist groups
- Becomes obsessed with conspiracy theories, messianic views or end-of-the-world narratives
- Expresses threatening, hateful or dehumanizing views towards other individuals or groups (who are often deemed to be opponents or enemies)
- Makes threatening or intimidating gestures towards groups or individuals they identify as being against their own beliefs or ideological points of view




ALARMING

BEHAVIOUR

This category includes a set of behaviours that attest to an exclusive and sectarian allegiance to an ideology or a cause, which lead the individual to perceive violence as the only legitimate and valid means of action.

- Takes part, regardless of the means (material, financial, or physical) in the activities of violent extremist groups
- Recruits individuals for a violent extremist cause (or encourages their adhesion to that cause)
- Is in contact with a group or a network of individuals known to be violent extremists, either online or in real life
- Reinforces own beliefs through regular consultation of violent extremist Internet forums and websites
- Commits or plans violent or hateful acts (vandalism, physical attacks, etc.) inspired by ideological motives or an extremist cause
- Learns about, seeks to acquire and/or practices handling weapons (firearms, explosives, etc.) outside the legal bounds
- Manifests an interest in or plans a trip to a conflict zone or to a region in which violent extremist groups are known to be active

If you believe the individual presents an immediate danger to himself/herself or others, call 911.



The Behaviour Barometer remains a guide, and its use should not lead to hasty conclusions, nor should it replace a more thorough professional evaluation. Furthermore, observed behaviours need to be contextualized if they are to be accurately assessed.

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