



What is Radicalisation?

Key message

Often the words or images that come to mind when we think of the term 'radicalisation' can vary greatly from person to person. These differences of opinion can be influenced by external factors such as media bias, prejudice, racism, influence of family/friends/peers/teachers, etc. Establishing a common understanding of the term and dispelling preconceptions by involving young people and agreeing a common definition is one of the first steps for promoting understanding among young people.

Key words: understanding radicalisation, raising awareness

The objective of the exercise is to explore individual and group perceptions around the theme of radicalisation, clarifying what we mean when we use this term and to determine quite simply what it is that we are actually talking about.

Module	Group size	Group age	Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early detection• Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• medium• large	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 16 - 19• 20 - 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 hour

Purpose

- Expose and discuss the range of different interpretations of the topic
- Identify common themes and opposing positions
- Determine how the young people in the group currently relate to this issue and assess the level of relevance within this particular target group
- Assess participants initial level of understanding of the topic, paying particular attention to any potential prejudices that may be emerging

Participants

Suitable for use with a wide variety of groups but may be most relevant to teenagers and young adults; non-gender specific.

Description

Step 1:

The facilitator invites each participant to individually come up with their own definition of radicalisation, based on their understanding of the word. Each group member captures this in a few lines on a post it. This part of the exercise should only take a few minutes and participants should be encouraged to write down the first thing that comes to mind without censoring themselves too much initially.

Step 2:

This definition is then shared with a partner and both individuals work together to merge the two views in order to create their joint definition. In order to do this, they will have to look for common threads in both their pieces and agree on something that captures both of their positions. The resulting definition is then put on a flipchart sheet.

Step 3:

Two pairs come together now to form a small working group of four. Each pair share their flipchart definition with the group and again the goal is to agree collectively on a definition that reflects all views and to ensure there is a consensus. The group definition is recorded on a flipchart sheet.

Step 4:

Everybody is brought back to the main group for feedback where each of the small working groups' are invited to share their definition and say a little about how they operated as a group in reaching their agreed position. If time allows you can refer to the flipcharts devised by the pairs first before moving onto the working group definitions. The flipchart sheets are placed around the room so the facilitator can reference them throughout the discussion.

Questions for Discussion:

- How did participants find the exercise?
- Was it difficult working alone initially and how did this differ from the dynamics of a partnership and small working group?
- What were the common themes, coming through?
- Were there many conflicting opinions and positions? if so how were these resolved?
- Do participants believe these definitions are also representative of the views of the wider community?
- Did they change their position at any point and if so, why?

Step 5:

The facilitator then reveals some official dictionary definitions to compare and contrast with the group versions. For the purposes of this exercise two examples have been given but different or additional versions may be used at the discretion of the facilitator.

Version 1 gives a comprehensive overview...

Radicalisation might be defined as “the growing willingness to support far-reaching changes in society, which may be aimed to the abolition of the established democratic legal order and which may involve the use of undemocratic methods” or “a process that leads an individual or a group to accept, support or encourage the use of violence as a political means” (From COPPRA Manual for Trainers <http://www.copptra.eu/dl/preview%20trainers%20manual.pdf>).

Version 2 is a very simple one-line summary

‘To make radical or more radical, as in politics: young people who are being radicalised by extreme philosophies’. (From the Random House Dictionary 2016)

Materials needed

Post it stickers or blank sheets of paper, Pens, Markers for flipchart, Flipchart.

Methodology

Individual reflection, Negotiation in pairs, Small group discussions, Feedback to main group.

Advice for Trainer

This exercise assumes a fair degree of literacy amongst group members. If using the resource with young people who are presenting issues around literacy you can adapt the exercise by just asking participants to talk about their understanding of the topic. This can still be done in pairs (with participants sharing their thoughts and definitions of the word verbally with each other) and then through small group discussions with each pair feeding back verbally to small working groups and then finally to the main group.

Source / Literature

Coppra Manual: www.coppra.eu/dl/preview%20trainers%20manual.pdf



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