



Dealing with Extremism and Terrorism

Look, I know this sounds like it's going to be volatile.

Extremism and terrorism.

It's hardly a course on accountancy, is it?

But this is a workbook, how bad can it be?

Have a little read – it's here to help.

It's important stuff, so being afraid of it or having strong opinions on it isn't an excuse to not know everything you can about it.

Let's dive in.

NAME _____



HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK?

We know this is a controversial subject. But we're not dealing in opinions.

This workbook will help you understand the subject matter better.

It'll help you understand what people mean when they talk about extremism and terrorism.

It'll help you understand how and why it happens.

It'll also give you an idea of what to do in the event you encounter them.

There are activities to help break it up, and questions to help the learning stick.

Who should use this workbook?

- Anyone in any work environment
- Employers who'd like to create a more harmonious work environment
- Anyone who values their safety and security
- Anyone concerned about the threat of extremism and terrorism

Key Insights

- Definitions of extremism and terrorism
- Causes of extremism
- Extremism and terrorism warning signs
- What to do if you suspect or encounter extremism and terrorism
- How best to prevent extremism and terrorism

MAKING SURE WE'RE ALL ON THE SAME PAGE

This workbook, if you haven't guessed already, is about extremism and terrorism.

We're not gonna get far unless we at least know what they are.

It's perfectly natural to have prejudices – it's how human beings operate – but for this, you'll have to leave them at the door.

Anyone can be an extremist. There's no "type" for terrorists.

Here's why:

Extremism

Extremism is the belief in, or advocacy of, a radical point of view.

By radical, we mean something far outside of the mainstream views of society.

But because "far outside" isn't something you can measure with percentages or numbers, there's a bit of a grey area.

For example, in the UK and US, only around 2-5% of people are vegetarian. It'd be strange to suggest that's an "extreme" view, but it could be argued that it is.

However, when we talk about "extremism", the extreme points of view in question are usually religious or political.

Terrorism

Terrorism is the use of violence or threats, designed to inspire fear, to achieve a political, ideological or religious goal.

Now, conceivably, that could include any act of warfare.

So, to differentiate, terrorism typically refers to acts carried out against civilians.

Again though, it's kind of open to interpretation.

If it's for a good cause, is it still terrorism? Is there ever a good cause for threatening or harming civilians?

It's not a simple question.

From those definitions, you can see how extremism and terrorism are linked.

Extremists can become terrorists by adding violence or threats to civilians into the mix.

Terrorists are, effectively, always extremists, insofar as they are prepared to use violence against civilians to get their way. Pretty extreme point of view, am I right?

So, let's put this into a bit of context for you. Here are some examples you may be familiar with.

The so-called Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for many terrorist attacks across the globe in recent years. The extremism views its members hold involve radical and warped religious ideologies.

There are also those with political extremist views that become terrorists. In Norway in 2011, Anders Breivik, a man with extreme right-wing political views, carried out terrorist attacks against civilians.

A person's background doesn't matter. What they look like, where they come from.

Anyone can be an extremist. If their beliefs are strong enough, and they go against the social norm, there's a risk.

TAKEAWAY

Extremism covers radical views, especially political or religious ones. Terrorism means acting on them with violence or threats of violence, especially against civilians.

There's no one type – it can be anyone.

HOW CAN ANYONE GO THAT FAR?

It may be difficult to picture being that extreme. After all, most of us sit well within the normal spectrum of the bell-curve.

But, if you think about it, we all have different beliefs.

We can come up with them ourselves, or be influenced by our friends, family, school, even society.

It's just that most of these differing, sometimes even conflicting beliefs, can live together in relative harmony.

What sports team you support. Who the best James Bond is. That stuff.

It's only when a belief, or people who hold a belief, actively try to reject a cohesive, integrated society, that the beliefs become problematic.

That's when they're truly going against the majority. That's when they're truly extreme.

And as soon as that active rejection of society begins to sanction violence, you have terrorism.

Again, you might wonder how things got that far.

But society is constantly changing.

Consider homosexuality – in many places it has only been legalised in the past century or so. In some places it's still illegal.

But would that be something worth fighting for? It's an extreme view in some places. Not in others.

That's not to excuse violence against civilians. But hopefully it'll make you think.

RADICALISATION

Now, we talked about influences when it comes to beliefs.

It happens a lot with extreme views

There's even the chance you could become extreme without realising it.

That's called radicalisation.

That's where extreme ideals, which undermine or reject the status quo, are pushed onto individuals. Usually vulnerable ones.

Extremists can try to recruit isolated people who might not fit in well to mainstream society. Either due to language or economic barriers, personal or group grievances. It can even be as simple as someone falling in love with an extremist.

And just like extremism and terrorism, there's no universally accepted definition for radicalisation.

It's usually a process, not an event. Changing views doesn't happen overnight.

Victims can be approached in person, via social media or other online messaging services, so it can be tricky to identify. But that doesn't mean there's nothing you can do to help.

TAKEAWAY

Extremism and terrorism can affect anyone. It's when the beliefs that we all have become too far outside of what's acceptable within mainstream society, causing some people to then seek to reject or undermine a peaceful status quo.

People can fall into extremism for a number of reasons. Radicalisation is where they're targeted by existing members of an extreme group – often when they're on the fringes of society to begin with.

HOW CAN I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Recognising it when you come across it is a start.

It's important to challenge any violent ideologies.

That's not necessarily getting involved in others' beliefs, which can be a recipe for disaster.

But you can create an environment where it's clear that violent views and terrorism are unacceptable, and can't be tolerated.

Stay vigilant. Keep an eye out for any communication or propaganda that might incite violence or hatred. Report anything that fits the bill.

That's stopping the process of radicalisation.

It's also important to help the vulnerable, or anyone in the process of being radicalised.

In terms of identifying them, you can look out for characteristics like:

- expression of support for violence and terrorism
- possession of violent extremist literature
- attempts to access or contribute to violent extremist websites
- possession of material regarding weapons or explosives
- possession of literature regarding military training, skills and techniques
- claims of involvement in organisations espousing violent extremist ideology
- claims of attendance at training camps
- claims of involvement in combat or violent activity on behalf of violent extremist groups

If you spot any signs of vulnerability, notify your management. There are also services and community-based organisations that are trained to assist vulnerable people.

Even if you aren't aware of any extremism, you can still reduce the risk of radicalisation at work.

Organisations should take part in activities like:

- Risk assessments
- Staff training
- IT and communications equipment monitoring
- Auditing and inspections

But importantly, people will feel less inclined to extremism if they feel a part of the community.

By creating an inclusive and welcoming environment, you can take away a lot of the motivating factors involved.

That means conversation. Openness.

It's not a lot of effort, and it makes a nicer working environment. Win-win really, right?

However, there's always a chance something could happen that's outside your control.

WHAT IF THERE’S A TERRORIST INCIDENT?

No fluff here. If a terrorist incident does take place at work, you need to know what to do.

If you hear gunshots, witness an attack, or are otherwise caught up in an incident, there are three things to remember.

RUN, HIDE, TELL.

If it’s safe to do so, **RUN**. Plan your route carefully as you go. Leave your work and any belongings. Move quickly and quietly. If your colleagues aren’t coming, don’t waste time trying to convince them. Weigh up whether it’s safer to wait for attackers to move on before you continue.

If it’s not safe to run, **HIDE**. Plan your escape routes. Look for somewhere without dead ends or bottlenecks. Ideally it’ll be somewhere you can lock yourself in, with a thick physical barrier between you and your attackers. Somewhere out of sight. Turn your phone to silent, and stay quiet. If you can evacuate, get as far away from danger as you can. Stop anyone else you might see approaching the danger zone.

When you’re safe, **TELL** the police, provided it doesn’t put anyone else in more danger. Tell them as much as you can about the incident: your location, that of the attackers, and the direction they’re moving. Descriptions of the attackers – number, appearance, clothing and weapons. Details about building access, information on any casualties, and anything else you think is important. If, while you’re on the phone, you can hear attackers, go silent – the police may still give instructions.

When police response arrives, their first priority will be to deal with the imminent threat, so they may not come straight for you. Don’t shout or wave. Don’t do anything that may be perceived as a threat. Remain calm, keep your hands visible and comply with any instructions.

Of course, these are guidelines.

In the event you have to fight, you should do so. If an attacker is within reach and you have no alternative, fight back with all your strength and conviction with whatever weapons are available to you.

But the run-hide-tell method is provided to help you stay safe. Remember it and put it into practice if at all possible.

TAKEAWAY

You can help minimise the risk of extremism and terrorism by creating an inclusive environment, and identifying those who are most vulnerable.

However, if an incident does take place, stay safe. Remember Run, Hide, Tell.

QUIZ

Extremism and Terrorism. Serious business.

That’s why it’s important you know about it.

To that end, here are a few questions. Recalling what you’ve just learned will help it move into your long-term memory, which is nice, isn’t it?

Let’s go.

1 What’s the difference between extremism, terrorism and radicalisation?

2 What are the key signs for vulnerability when it comes to radicalisation?

3 What sorts of things would constitute extremist material or literature?

4 What are the three key steps you should take in the event of a terrorist incident?

FINAL SUMMARY

It's not easy to talk about extremism and terrorism, because it's so serious. It's so controversial. It can all end up making us feel bad.

But the fact is, we have to. Without being dramatic, if we don't, people could die.

In this workbook, we've learned that extremism and terrorism, while somewhat flexible in their definitions, involve radical views that are generally incompatible with society.

We've seen that it can affect anyone, but those most at risk are typically isolated or marginalised.

We know that if you suspect any radicalisation, or signs of extremism, be sure to report to management, and possibly the police, anonymously.

And lastly, in the event of a terrorist attack, you know to stick to the Run, Hide and Tell principle, where possible.

Optimism bias is what it's called when we think "It'll never happen to me". But if everyone thinks that, and it still happens, obviously it can happen to you.

But you can minimise the risk or threat by dealing with extremism and terrorism the way you've learned in this workbook.

