How to help prevent radicalisation of young people by raising their self-awareness of cognitive biases

Toolkit for Social Workers, Youth Workers and Mental Health Professionals



Prevention of Youth Radicalisation Through Self-Awareness of Cognitive Biases (PRECOBIAS)

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We also express our special thanks to the social workers and interns who have contributed to developing this toolkit in Hungary.







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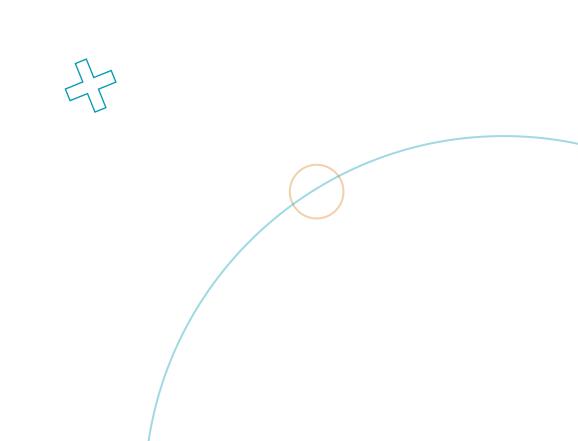








## **INTRODUCTION**



#### About this toolkit

We have developed this toolkit with two main objectives in mind. Our main intention was to raise the issue of cognitive biases and their potential role in the process of radicalisation of young people. Cognitive biases may be regarded as yet another important factor in the "kaleidoscope of factors", creating infinite individual combinations which may contribute to radicalisation and lead to violent extremism.<sup>1</sup>

Our brains are constantly flooded with tons of information, and we are simply unable to process every piece of it in a thorough and extensive manner. Instead, our brains often take mental shortcuts that make it easier to process information and make judgements in a fast, efficient and effortless way. They allow us to avoid the cognitive effort of analysing every piece of information elaborately. And that's where cognitive biases come in. They are seen as "distortions of reasoning" and they cause our brains to deviate from rationality. In taking the shortcut, our brains skip the part where they have to treat the information elaborately and consider all its aspects, which has a negative impact on the quality of our decisions. And the danger lies in the fact that we, humans, are largely unaware of these cognitive biases. Furthermore, cognitive biases are not exceptional phenomena: more than 200 different biases have been listed so far. Social media, where ideas are mostly reduced to some words and expressed through (emotional) visual content, particularly trigger some cognitive biases.

In this toolkit we have covered nine selected cognitive biases, they have been selected through scientific research, among many other biases which could be relevant to approach with young people in the context of radicalisation.

Secondly, we wished to introduce the concept of radicalisation, leading to violent extremism, to social workers, youth workers and mental health professionals in Eastern and Central European countries, where this phenomenon is not widely recognised by these professional groups or other important actors such as teachers, local authorities etc.

For this reason we have included chapters with basic information on radicalisation (its definition, the main factors, the main extremist movements in Europe), extremist propaganda and ways of recruitment to radicalised groups. We have used the well-known Staircase to Terrorism Model, developed by Fathali Moghaddam, in order to present the stages of radicalisation and possible ways of responding to it and preventing it in related general guidelines. Finally, you will find here suggestions for activities focused on building young people's resilience to radicalisation and extremism and working with the selected cognitive biases.

We strongly recommend following our free of charge online course entitled "Prevention of Youth Radicalisation Through Self-Awareness on Cognitive Biases" on www.precobias.eu In the course you will find out more about cognitive biases and their role in radicalisation, and this will be of great help

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<sup>1</sup> Ranstorp, M., Hyllengren, P., *Förebyggande av våldsbejakande extremism I tredjeland*, Swedish Defence University (2013) in: Ranstorp M., *RAN Issue Paper: The Root Causes of Violent Extremism*, Radicalisation Awareness Network, 4 January 2016.

when conducting the activities included in the toolkit.

Our course is aimed at professionals working with the youth, interested in cognitive biases and radicalisation. It contains clusters about extremism, radicalisation, cognitive psychology and 10 selected cognitive biases, illustrated with many examples from daily life and from extremist contexts. You can start whenever you want and progress at your own pace. If you complete the 10-hour programme of the course, you will get an international university certificate of participation, awarded by two of Europe's premier universities (Ghent University, Belgium and Ludwig Maximilians University Munich, Germany).

#### About the PRECOBIAS project

PRECOBIAS (Prevention of Youth Radicalisation Through Self-Awareness on Cognitive Biases) is a campaign project that centres around the mental processes and cognitive biases at play when youngsters are faced with extremist or terrorist discourses on social media. By enhancing the digital resilience and critical thinking of our target audience, we want to prevent and counter radicalisation in the long term. PRECOBIAS helps young people to understand themselves better by revealing the underlying mental processes and cognitive biases that shape their interpretations and analyses of social media content.

To reach these objectives, PRECOBIAS is aimed at:

- vulnerable and radicalised youngsters. How? Through a social media campaign with videos, an Instagram contest and a self-test to increase awareness of cognitive biases
- teachers and social workers who work with and support young people at risk of radicalisation. How? By offering a free of charge online course entitled "Prevention of Youth Radicalisation Through Self-Awareness on Cognitive Biases" as well as two toolkits with ready-to-use activities.

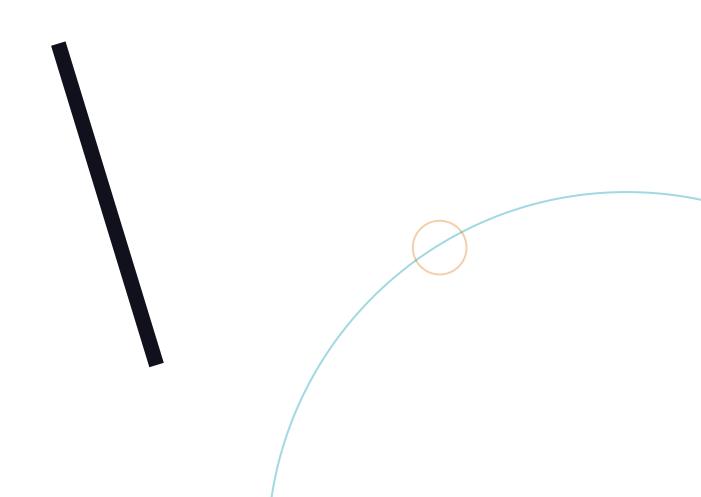
PRECOBIAS involves partners from six EU countries (Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Slovakia). The project comprises scientific research on cognitive biases and radicalisation on social media, conducted by researchers from Ghent University (Belgium) and Ludwig-Maximilians-University (Germany). The teaching resources developed thanks to the project focus on ten biases that have been selected through scientific research, among many other biases which could be relevant to approach radicalisation with students.







## WHAT IS RADICALISATION?



#### What is radicalisation?

Let's start with defining radicalisation. It is a process of adopting an extremist and violence-based ideology or beliefs by a person or a group of people. It entails the rejection of status quo accepted by the general public. Radicalisation involves rejecting fundamental democratic values (such as equality and diversity) and the increasing tendency to use violence to achieve ideological goals. There are many paths to it – social isolation, polarisation of views, condemnation of differences, conspiracy theories, hate speech and hate crimes. The phenomenon of radicalisation has different forms. They range from ideological extremism, through crime, to religious fundamentalism. The radicalisation process may lead to violent extremism and even terrorism.<sup>2</sup>

#### How does radicalisation manifest itself?

In public space, we come into contact with already established groups that have often been operating for many years and organisations with strongly motivated leaders or even armed paramilitary groups that are glued together by stereotypes, xenophobia and hatred. In Europe, these groups are starting to try to impose their beliefs on others by force. They attack, both on the Internet and directly, members of ethnic, religious and sexual minorities and those with political views that are not in line with their extremist dogmas. They destroy public and private property, assault people, set fire to their apartments and cars and even resort to using firearms and bombs.

Violence is an inherent part of extremist organisations' activity. Assault, blackmail, fraud, murder – all these are often committed by perpetrators with radical political views. Attitudes towards women and vulnerable people and communities also encourage criminal activities in extremist groups – many extremist ideologies incorporate patriarchal, chauvinist and sexist views which lay the foundation for such activities as human trafficking, prostitution and people smuggling.

Unless we are able to eliminate poverty, marginalisation and lack of career and growth prospects, we should maximally leverage the existing resources and social innovations so as to mitigate and reduce the effects of radicalisation in society, to provide the vulnerable groups with an alternative path of development and a sense of agency and to prevent the proliferation of communities posing a threat to public safety and social security. We need to understand what radicalisation entails, what causes it, how we can help prevent and counter it and who will support us in this task.<sup>3</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> Purski J., (2019), *Radicalisation*, International Institute of Civil Society, p. 1.

### The causes and factors contributing to radicalisation

According to Magnus Ranstorp<sup>4</sup>, violent extremism can be best seen as a kaleidoscope of factors, creating infinite individual combinations. There are some basic primary factors which create complex interlocking combinations:

- #1 Individual socio-psychological factors include grievances and emotions such as: alienation and exclusion; anger and frustration; grievance and a strong sense of injustice; feelings of humiliation; rigid binary thinking; a tendency to misinterpret situations; conspiracy theories; a sense of victimhood; personal vulnerabilities; counter-cultural elements.
- **#2** Social factors include social exclusion; marginalisation and discrimination (real or perceived); limited social mobility; limited education or employment; an element of displacement; criminality; lack of social cohesion and self-exclusion.
- **#3** Political factors, which can include, for example, grievances framed around victimhood against Western foreign policy and military intervention.
- #4 Ideological/religious factors include, for example, a sacred historical mission and belief in apocalyptic prophesy; a Salafi-Jihadi interpretation of Islam; a violent jihadi mission; a sense that Islam is under siege and a desire to protect ummah under assault. These beliefs also include the view that Western society embodies immoral secularism.
- **#5** Culture and identity crisis relates to cultural marginalisation, which produces alienation and a lack of belonging to either home or the parents' society.
- **#6** Trauma and other trigger mechanisms involve psychological trauma experienced via parents with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other complex psychological problems.
- **#7** Group dynamics involve charismatic leadership; pre-existing friendship and kinship ties; socialisation; groupthink; self-isolation; polarising behaviour and counter-cultural elements.
- **#8** Radicalisers/groomers involve hate preachers and those that prey on vulnerabilities and grievances and channel recruits into violent extremism through persuasion, pressure and manipulation. This underscores the importance of extremist milieus existing in so-called underground study circles or in prison.



#### notes

Ranstorp, M., Hyllengren, RAN ISSUE PAPER: The Root Causes of Violent Extremism, Radicalisation Awareness Network,
 January 2016.

**#9** Social media, which provides connectivity, virtual participation and an echo-chamber for likeminded extremist views. The internet "reaches otherwise unreachable individuals"; it accelerates the process of radicalisation; and increases opportunities for self-radicalisation.

### Types of radicalisation<sup>5</sup>

The process of radicalisation is complex. It involves mainly people and groups that start to be actively non-cooperative and violate fundamental democratic values, such as equality and diversity, due to their deliberate actions. It is also characterised by an increasing tendency to use violence as a means to achieve political goals that reject and/or challenge democracy. Usually, this process is not very fast. An individual goes through successive stages of radicalisation that may finally lead to violent acts and terrorism. We can identify the problem, adequately respond to it and start the process of "returning radicalised people to society" (deradicalise them) at each of these stages. The radicalisation process is similar for each type of extremism: religious, nationalistic, fascist and for some left-wing movements. The choice mainly depends on the community in which extremists grow up or with which they frequently come into contact.

Radicalisation takes many forms, depending on the context. It may be caused by various factors and be related to various ideologies. There are four basic forms of radicalisation:

- Far-right radicalisation related to fascism, racism, white supremacy and nationalism. It is characterised by the rhetoric based on the protection of racial or ethnic identity. It entails hostility towards state authorities, minorities, immigrants and other (mostly left-wing and liberal) political groups.
- Political and religious radicalisation based on political interpretation of religion. It takes the form of the defense (also by means of violence) of the religious identity perceived as the object of an "attack" (by international conflicts, foreign policy, social debates, etc.). Recently, the most visible type of political and religious radicalisation is Islamic fundamentalism; however, radicalisation may be related to any religion – even Christianity.
- Far-left radicalisation focuses mainly on anti-capitalist demands. This category includes anarchists, Maoists, Trotskyists and Marxist-Leninists that resort to violence.



<sup>5</sup> Purski J., (2019), *Radicalisation*, International Institute of Civil Society, p. 1.

#### notes

 Individual radicalisation, which is generally motivated by one problem. This category includes: radical environmentalists and animal rights advocates, anti-abortion extremists and certain anti-gay and anti-feminist movements that use violence to "promote" their ideology. Murderers motivated by an ideology can also be included in this category.<sup>6</sup>

#### The main extremist currents in Europe

In Europe, the main extremist groups are characterised by their neofascists, Islamist, nationalistic and anarchist traits and propensities.

#### Neofascists:

- "Third Position": neofascist religious Catholic fundamentalists with anti-capitalist, nationalistic, anti-Semitic and anti-communist views; the group is well-connected with the regimes in Syria and Iran and the Shiite terrorists from Hezbollah.
- "New Right": neofascist new pagans with anti-capitalist and anti-immigrant views; they are connected with Russian Eurasianism or advocate for pan-European fascism.
- Nationalist radicalism: neofascist supporters of revolutionary nationalism who advocate for the abolition of democracy and establishment of a hierarchical authoritarian regime of a nationalist and religious fundamentalist nature.
- Autonomic nationalism: a variant of anti-capitalist neofascism that draws from anarchism and early pre-war Nazism. Its supporters form a so-called "black block" (due to the color of their clothes) at public demonstrations. Their symbols include crossed hammer and sword or a cogwheel.
- Identitarianism: a school of neofascism focused on fighting immigration to Europe and preserving its "cultural identity" as a region "for white people". One of its symbols is the Greek lambda letter inscribed within a circle.

#### Neo-Nazis:

- Blood & Honor an international neo-Nazi group from the so-called "white nations"; its armed branch is a terrorist organization Combat 18. They often use the colors of the Third Reich in their symbols – red, white and black – and the symbolism of numbers replacing letters, e.g. 18 (Adolf Hitler), 28 (Blood & Honor) or 88 (Heil Hitler);
- Nationalist and socialist Black Metal supporters of the type of black metal that combines satanism and Nazism.

Islamists:

- IS, ISIS, ISIL, Daesh, i.e. the so-called "Islamic State" supporters of the radical version of Islamic fundamentalism that is responsible for numerous terrorist attacks in Europe and Middle East;
- Wahhabis a reformative, religious and political movement derived from Sunni Islam that was formed in the 18th century in the Arabia. It is described as "ultraconservative", "rigid", "fundamentalist" and "puritanic". Teachings and scriptures of Wahhabi scholars are thought to be responsible for the establishment of many radical, Sunni terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram or the so-called Islamic State.
- Salafists one of the Islamic fundamentalist brands that advocates returning to the roots of Islam and carries out extensive missionary activities.

### Far-left movements:

- Insurrectionist anarchists a school of anarchism that is critical of legal forms of the movement. They prefer direct action, such as theft, sabotage, assault on law enforcement and forcibly seizing control of a territory from state authorities.
- National Bolshevism a hybrid movement that combines left-wing anti-Americanism and social redistribution programmes with nationalism and militarism as well as pro-Russian sympathies; the movement is active in separationist republics of the Eastern Ukraine, among others.

## Extremist propaganda – goals and mechanisms<sup>7</sup>

Extremist propaganda generally has three goals. The first goal is to provide the audience with a sense of meaning, a framework that gives meaning to everything and helps them understand the world. Secondly, propaganda is meant to enhance the credibility of the extremist organisation. The third objective of propaganda is to bring about behaviour change, and motivate the





7 Based on: Bouko, C., Rieger D., Carton J., Naderer B., (2021), Cognitive biases in the radicalization process, Massive Open Online Course, Cluster 2 Session 2. audience so that they become willing to engage and take action.

Extremist groups want their target groups to see, judge and understand the world through their extremist lenses. We all have a system of meaning that shapes the way we perceive things, a framework of reference that makes us process and interpret things in a particular manner. The goal of extremist propaganda is to give its audience a new system of meaning that takes over and replaces the one that was already there. This system of meaning is a network of mental models that supporters of the extremist group adopt, that gives them a new, extremist perspective on the world. Extremists employ three techniques that shape the way their audience perceives the world, or in other words, three techniques that shape people's system of meaning: identity constructs, crisis constructs and solution constructs.

Humans harbour the need for a clear identity. This is what adolescence is all about: teenagers and young adults are typically in search of an identity, trying to find out what defines them as a person. Extremist propaganda appeals to that, by placing emphasis on identity, encouraging individuals to embrace the one aspect of their identity that they share with the extremist group. For Islamic extremism, that means that individuals are urged to define themselves primarily according to their religion. Right-wing extremists will stress the importance and prevalence of the racial identity of its audience, and so on.

Secondly, perceptions of crisis also play an important role in shaping the system of meaning. This is closely linked to the identity construct, because the propaganda often implies that the identity of the audience, for example the religious identity of Muslims, is threatened and therefore finds itself in a crisis. The idea of the in-group vs the out-group is often used in that respect. The propaganda emphasizes the differences between the in-group identity and the out-group identity, focusing on the negative attributes of the outgroup and creating a sense of fear and threat.

The crisis construct can also be directed more at the individual. Individuals who are insecure or experience feelings of uncertainty are more likely to support extremism. The narratives and propaganda of extremist groups are designed to evoke feelings of uncertainty among the audience. For example by causing doubt about the purpose of life and raising existential questions, or in the case of Islamic extremism, planting doubts about what the true Islam is. Another manifestation of the crisis construct is the breakdown of traditions. Extremist propaganda will claim that traditional beliefs, rituals or practices honoured by the in-group are being threatened by the out-group.

The third construct that extremist groups use to shape their audience's system of meaning are solution constructs. The idea behind it is that being a member of the group will relieve you from all your problems. Anything that causes the sense of crisis will be fixed when you join the group. In a sense, the solution construct propagates the opposite of the crisis construct.



### Recruitment – different pathways to radicalisation<sup>®</sup>

There are many ways to become radicalised and to join an extremist group or movement. However, there are several basic forms of recruitment:

- "Deliberate recruitment", meaning that the individual is actively and intentionally searching for like-minded individuals and deliberately makes the choice to join a specific extremist group. If a person chooses a particular extremist group in this way, their reasons are usually ideological in nature.
- "Social recruitment", where we shift on one of the axes. There's still an active search going on from the individual's perspective, but it's more a search for meaning and social inclusion. The difference with deliberate recruitment is that the individual is not specifically looking for an extremist group. The individual is unaware of the real nature of the organisation. They are looking for a solution, and as they gradually become part of the group, they start to believe that being a member of this organisation is that solution they're looking for. Ideological motives are of less importance here, especially in the beginning of the recruitment process.
- "Peer group recruitment", meaning that the individual is guided or led into the extremist group by others, often family or friends - peers as we call them - who are already members. The individual is still intentionally becoming part of the group, which means that they know what the group is about, and what they stand for. With unintentional forms of recruitment, that's not the case.
- "Classic recruitment", unintentional, meaning that the individual does not suspect anything about the real nature of the extremist group. They are recruited by third parties and gradually introduced into, or indoctrinated with the ideology of the organisation.





## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS, YOUTH WORKERS AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING RADICALISATION



#### What you can do

Social workers, youth workers and mental health professionals (such as psychologists and psychotherapists) closely work with young people, and often with their families. They offer them guidance and support and build relationships based on mutual trust. They may also be the first to notice various signs that indicate a young person is being influenced by extremist peers, ideologies or movements.

We believe that these professionals should be equipped with basic knowledge of radicalisation. They should also know who to turn to for further help and how to work with professionals from other areas in order to prevent young people from becoming radicalised. Radicalisation is a complex social issue, it affects well-being, safety and security of individuals and their families, communities and society at large. Therefore it should also be approached by a team of specialists from different fields - social workers, youth workers and mental health professionals being vital members of it.

### Who can support you? Co-operation with other specialists – the multi-agency approach

The issue of radicalisation and extremism may be overwhelming. Various ideologies, propaganda and recruitment networks, violence, crimes and terrorism – how to fight or even approach that? Fortunately, you are not alone.

If the person you came into contact with in your workplace is at the early stage of radicalisation (see chapter on Moghaddam's Staircase to Terrorism Model, then, at this stage, you can reach out to specialised civil society organizations that may help assess the threat in this situation and recommend appropriate means of action.

It is possible that such an individual is at the very beginning of their path to radicalisation and can be convinced to abandon it with "soft" measures. In such a case, it is possible that it will be sufficient to implement deradicalisation actions that entail fostering pro-democratic and tolerant attitudes by raising the potential future radical's acceptance of diversity, addressing their hatred towards minorities and carrying out educational and cultural activities. It may be a good solution to establish co-operation with ethnic, religious and social communities' organisations and include them in the work with this person. You may invite representatives of these organisations or groups to your workplace, organise a meeting with them, facilitate contacts and present social and cultural diversity in practice. We recommend contacting museums or arts and culture institutions whose scope of activities includes raising awareness of issues linked to radicalisation. It may be a local institution that commemorates the victims of totalitarian ideologies (such as Nazism). A local library, theatre or community centre whose activities may include an appropriate form of work with a person at an early stage of radicalisation may also be helpful.

Specialised civil society organisations may also put you in contact with



other professionals and practitioners – prison guards, probation officers, educators, teachers or police officers who have experience in dealing with people at the beginning of their path towards radicalisation.

However, if you or a specialised civil society organisation believe that the person you want to help is more advanced in their radicalisation process – they belong to a political organisation of this kind, have committed hate misdemeanors or crimes, are violent in their everyday lives, carry insignia related to political or religious radicalism or have tattoos of such nature, it is possible that "hard" measures need to be taken. In this case, you need to reach out to an institution that fights or prevents criminal offenses. Here, it will be police and the prosecutor's office and in the case of minors – board of education, social welfare centers and family courts. In the most drastic cases, such as conducting or planning terrorist activities, an institution responsible for internal security in your country should be involved.

## How to protect yourself and your co-workers?

Some highly radicalised people can be dangerous since they strongly believe that they are saving the world and will not hesitate to use any means necessary, including violence and murder. You should not trivialise the engagement in extremist communities of others around you nor should you consider it a "phase" that will pass. Extremists often live in a "besieged fortress" and feel threatened by the attention of any public institution; they are particularly prone to rash and violent behaviour. That is why it is especially important to keep in touch with a specialised institution when working with such people and to take care of your and your coworkers' safety. When you meet such individuals at your workplace, you should first and foremost:

- exercise caution and observe the limited trust principle;
- reach out to specialised institutions and organisations;
- do not take any action without informing your coworkers and supervisors;
- do not provide radicals with your personal data, address or other contact details.





## FATHALI MOGHADDAM'S STAIRCASE TO TERRORISM MODEL

When talking about the process of radicalisation and possible measures to prevent its escalation, the model developed by Fathali Moghaddam seems the most pertinent and effective to us. Moghaddam is an Iranian-born psychologist, an expert in the field of culture and intergroup conflict, with a particular focus on the psychology of globalisation, radicalisation, human rights and duties, and terrorism. He is currently a professor at the Department of Psychology and a faculty fellow at the Berkley Centre.

The model he proposed in 2005 is called "The Staircase to Terrorism" and describes a metaphorical staircase where the five floors represent the different stages a person passes through before reaching the top floor, which is actually committing a terrorist act. While discussing his model, Moghaddam emphasises that the central idea behind it is that "terrorism can be understood best through a focus on the psychological interpretation of material conditions and the options seen to be available to overcome perceived injustices".<sup>9</sup> In Moghaddam's model, the process of radicalisation consists in moving from one floor to the next. On each floor, there are doors which could be opened or not. People climb up to the next floor when they see no other legitimate option or choice offered or available to them, even if that means causing harm to themselves and to others.<sup>10</sup>

The Staircase to Terrorism Model can be illustrated by a pyramid chart, which means that the higher the floor, i.e. the stage of radicalisation, the fewer people there are and the fewer choices or options are available to them. Only a very small portion of the individuals on the ground floor will eventually reach the top floor. It is important to remember that radicalisation does not automatically lead to violence or terrorism.<sup>11</sup>

In the next chapters we will have a closer look at the floors in Moghaddam's model and provide recommendations regarding the measures and actions that can be taken to prevent young people from climbing up these stairs.

notes

<sup>10</sup> Young H., Holsappel J., Rooze M., de Wolf A., Russel J., Hasan U., (2014), *TerRa Toolkit. Community Approach to Radicalisation, p. 4*, https://terratoolkit.eu/

<sup>11</sup> Bouko, C., Rieger D., Carton J., Naderer B., (2021), *Cognitive biases in the radicalization process*, Massive Open Online Course, Cluster 2 Session 1.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Bouko, C., Rieger D., Carton J., Naderer B., (2021), *Cognitive biases in the radicalization process*, Massive Open Online Course, Cluster 2 Session 1.

### **#**O Ground floor: risk and resilience

The lowest floor, or the ground floor, is occupied by hundreds of millions of people who share one common feature: a negative psychological interpretation of their material conditions. People on the ground floor experience feelings of shame or frustration, they feel that they are being treated<sup>12</sup> with injustice. It should be noted that this is about perception of injustice and unfair treatment, about how these people view their own circumstances. An individual who lives in extremely poor or inhumane circumstances can be perfectly content and not feel deprived, while another person living in relatively comfortable conditions can feel very unjustly treated. If someone feels that they and their fellow members of an ethnic, religious, political or even professional group do not have the same advantages as those from other groups, this sense of being unfairly treated can grow and encourage some individuals to move on to the first floor in the process of radicalisation. What is also important is the lack of the sense of agency - helplessness and the feeling that one is unable to positively influence or change one's situation through the available legitimate means.<sup>13</sup>

At this stage of the process of radicalisation an individual may:<sup>14</sup>

- Be attracted to radicalised by extremists groups which offer a clear sense of identity, a set of rules on how to behave and dress, what kind of beliefs to adopt and what kind of music to listen to. The search for identity and a sense of belonging is universal during the teenage years, belongingness meets the essential emotional need to affiliate with and be accepted by members of a group. Therefore, young people who feel that these needs are not satisfied, may turn to alternative groups.
- Fall under the influence of their peers, friends or family members who sympathise with or are already members of radicalised groups or movements. The influence of the people teenagers trust and are close to is usually stronger.
- Experience real or perceived discrimination or unfair treatment. These concepts are crucial when on the ground floor. If a young person has experienced racism or seen that another ethnic, religious, social or political group received preferential treatment, they are likely to feel resentful. If they cannot find or are not offered a legitimate solution to remedy this situation and redress the (also perceived) harm done to them, they may search for solutions and ways to vent their resentment outside their usual groups and networks of friends and in this search come across radicalised movements.
- Look for comfort and understanding from other groups which offer protection and a strong group identity, especially if they feel socially isolated, more introverted, are bullied or humiliated and do not have many friends who can support them.

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#### notes

# 12 Ibid., p. 163 13 Young H., Holsappel J., Rooze M., de Wolf A., Russel J., Hasan U., (2014), *TerRa Toolkit. Community Approach to Radicalisation*, page 4, https://terratoolkit.eu/

### #] First floor: dealing with youngsters developing sympathy for radical ideas

Some young people, when they feel they cannot influence their situation through legitimate means, can be compelled to progress to the first floor. Moghaddam explained this first step on the path of radicalisation referring to "perceived options to fight unfair treatment". Indeed, feelings of frustration can lead people to explore other options to fight injustice. They may feel like their actions aren't effective enough in fighting the discrimination they experience, which may make susceptible to radical ideas, inducing them to climb the stairs. This is how they are attracted to groups which provide a feeling that action is being taken against discrimination. If family members or professionals don't intervene, the process can quickly escalate towards a search for answers in extremist and radical ideologies.

At this stage of the process of radicalisation an individual may:<sup>15</sup>

- Tend to attribute their failures in fulfilling goals or ambitions not to circumstances or personal shortcomings, but to discrimination.
- Start losing confidence and trust in established authority (school, police, government etc.).
- Become increasingly aware of group identities and start using the "us versus them" narrative, identifying with one group and pitting it against a different group.
- Become particularly susceptible, in their search for a clear, strong identity, to external influences and ideas from new friends and groups who share their impressions of injustice and unfair treatment and propose alternative and effective solutions in order to address these injustices. An interest in a new group of peers may become visible at this stage and certain subtle changes in the individual's appearance.



### <sup>15</sup> Based on: Young H., Holsappel J., Rooze M., de Wolf A., Russel J., Hasan U., (2014), TerRa Toolkit. Community Approach to Radicalisation, https://terratoolkit.eu/

#### notes

### #2 Second floor: What if they go looking for a radical group to join?

The second floor is called 'displacement of aggression'. This means that people who occupy this floor develop feelings of anger and hate toward a particular enemy who they believe to be the cause of their feelings of injustice. This can be a country, a race, a religion or any entity that they deem responsible for their poor circumstances.<sup>16</sup>

On the second floor, some individuals feel that the 'injustices' they experience cannot be redressed through legitimate means and these perceptions form the basis for a new morality. This is where a person develops interest in radical ideology and solutions. In fact, this is still relatively harmless, until the radical group comes in and supply meets the demand. When a person starts to engage in extremist morality, they enter the third floor.

On the second floor the individual may:<sup>17</sup>

- Change their appearance, including clothes, hair, tattoos, displaying different patterns.
- Change their identity, sometimes even their name.
- Change their behaviour, for example giving up smoking or drinking, changing their diet, skipping classes or participating in political events such as demonstrations.
- Change their peer group. In other words, they start to spend less time with their previous friends and spend less time doing the activities they used to. Instead they form a new group of friends consisting of the members of the radical group.
- Behave in a threatening way towards the outgroup members. Have an increased sense of anger towards society. Decline in performance at school.



**<sup>16</sup>** Moghaddam, F. M. (2005). *The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration*. American Psychologist, 60(2), 161–169. (page 164-165) in: Bouko, C., Rieger D., Carton J., Naderer B., Massive Open Online Course *Cognitive biases in the radicalization process*, Cluster 2 Session 1, 2021

<sup>17</sup> Based on: Young H., Holsappel J., Rooze M., de Wolf A., Russel J., Hasan U., (2014), *TerRa Toolkit. Community Approach to Radicalisation*, p. 10, https://terratoolkit.eu/

### **#3** Third floor: If they integrate into the radical group

The third floor is called 'moral engagement'. Terrorist groups are said to be morally disengaged, mainly for their willingness to commit acts of violence against the general population. But from the perspective of an insider, these groups are morally engaged and they consider the agents of the government to be morally disengaged. Recruits are convinced to become committed to the morality of the terrorist group through different tactics, such as isolation, affiliation, secrecy and fear. Studies reveal that during the recruitment process the individual continues to live their 'normal life' in parallel, however their goal is to develop their ingroup lives in secrecy. When people actually become members of a terrorist group, they enter the fourth floor.<sup>18</sup>

At this phase of radicalisation the individual may:<sup>19</sup>

- Sense that violence as a means of addressing unfairness within society is legitimate.
- Force group rules on others or challenge outgroup members who do not comply with the recommended behaviour.
- Participate in secret reunions.
- Possess propaganda materials.
- Become increasingly hateful against people who do not share their views.
- Terrorise other group members who intend to leave the group.
- Slowly reduce their presence at school or involvement in other standardised activities as a result of being more present in the life of the radicalised group.



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**18** Moghaddam, F. M. (2005), *The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration, American Psychologist*, 60(2), 161–169. (p. 165) in: Bouko, C., Rieger D., Carton J., Naderer B., (2021), *Cognitive biases in the radicalization process,* Massive Open Online Course, Cluster 2 Session 1.

<sup>19</sup> Based on: Young H., Holsappel J., Rooze M., de Wolf A., Russel J., Hasan U., (2014), *TerRa Toolkit. Community Approach to Radicalisation*, https://terratoolkit.eu/

#### #U Fourth and fifth floor: If they turn into hardcore radicals

According to Moghaddam, once an individual has progressed to the fourth floor, "solidification of categorical thinking and perceived legitimacy of the terrorist organisation" takes place. From this floor on, there's really no way back, or as Moghaddam puts it: "there is little or no opportunity to exit alive".<sup>20</sup> At this stage a radicalised individual functions as a member of a terrorist group which gives them a sense of meaning and belonging, along with the necessary support. Such individuals are fully committed to the extremist organisation and have internalised its belief system and, typically, the "us vs. them" thinking that characterises such systems. "The organisation is seen as a just means to an ideal end".<sup>21</sup> In the case of 'self-generated' terrorist individuals who act alone and in small groups, their behaviour is often reinforced through the Internet. This reinforcement is also sustained through a 'parallel universe' that is created by the terrorist individual, a universe that is completely secretive and sees mainstream society as evil and a justifiable target for terrorist attacks.<sup>22</sup>

The fifth and last floor is referred to as "the terrorist act and sidestepping inhibitory mechanisms" and it is here that terrorist acts are committed. Typical features of the definition of a terrorist act include that it is about violence directed at civilians. Moghaddam raises the question that we are probably all asking ourselves at this point: how can an individual be capable of killing an innocent civilian? Do they have no morals? Won't they start to doubt themselves when they see an innocent person begging for their lives? It's a known fact that when a victim cries, begs, pleads or makes eye contact, this can trigger what we call inhibitory mechanisms in the attacker, which might cause them to change their mind. These are mechanisms that evolved to limit the aggression of humans or animals against one another. But terrorists, unfortunately, are trained to circumvent those mechanisms. The key factor for them to prevent their inhibitory mechanisms from being activated is to psychologically distance themselves from the human beings they're planning to attack. Civilians are systematically categorised as part of the out-group, so they are seen as the enemy, and the differences between in-group and out-group are exaggerated. This psychological distance makes terrorists less likely to feel sympathy for their victims.<sup>23</sup>

#### notes

21 Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Young H., Holsappel J., Rooze M., de Wolf A., Russel J., Hasan U., (2014), *TerRa Toolkit. Community Approach to Radicalisation*, p. 4, https://terratoolkit.eu/

<sup>23</sup> Bouko, C., Rieger D., Carton J., Naderer B., (2021), 2021), *Cognitive biases in the radicalization process*, Massive Open Online Course, Cluster 2 Session 1.



Moghaddam, F. M. (2005), *The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration*, American Psychologist, 60(2), 161–169. (p. 166) in: Bouko, C., Rieger D., Carton J., Naderer B., (2021), *Cognitive biases in the radicalization process*, Massive Open Online Course, Cluster 2 Session 1.

At this stage of the process of radicalisation an individual may:<sup>24</sup>

- Believe that using violence to address unfairness within society is legitimate and state it openly.
- Impose group rules on others, or challenge non-members so that they conform to the behaviour suggested by the group.
- Participate in closed meetings.
- Possess propaganda material.
- Become more extreme in expressions of hate about those who do not share his/her views.
- Threaten other group members who try to leave the group.
- Be less present and visible at school or in other organised activities as a result of now extreme connection with the radical group.
- Abandon a more extreme "look" in an attempt to blend in with peers, so as to escape the notice of law enforcement personnel and other professional groups.
- Recruit and train new members of the group.
- Make actual preparations for an attack, gathering supplies, carrying our reconnaissance.
- Produce written or video material about his/her intentions.

In the Staircase Model, the mental radicalisation process plays a more important role in the first floors, while the influence of the extremist group and the actual recruitment process gradually become more important as the individual climbs higher up the staircase. Another important thing that cannot be emphasised enough is that the ground floor is occupied by millions of people, while only a very small minority moves up until the top floor. This is caused by a confluence of various factors, described previously while discussing the complex phenomenon of radicalisation.<sup>25</sup>



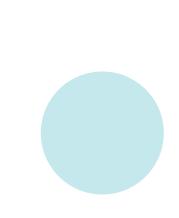
### <sup>24</sup> Based on: Young H., Holsappel J., Rooze M., de Wolf A., Russel J., Hasan U., (2014), *TerRa Toolkit. Community Approach to Radicalisation*, p. 4, https://terratoolkit.eu/

notes





## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS



#### **PRECOBIAS - Toolkit for Social Workers, Youth Workers and Mental Health Professionals**

Below we present a set of recommendations regarding what could be the focus points for social workers and youth workers or mental health professionals while working with young people at different stages of radicalisation. The recommendations presented here are based on those provided by the authors of the previously mentioned Terra Toolkit,<sup>26</sup> and supplemented with several recommendations from a group of Hungarian social workers who have contributed to this toolkit.

- Provide support for forming a stronger positive identity for the young person. This can consist in encouraging their interest in hobbies and helping them develop their talents. Sporting, artistic or musical talents can all provide a positive identity and a potential social group. Actively support the development of these skills where you can, for example by suggesting joining a sporting group, getting in contact with a role model or simply displaying interest.
- Maintain contact and open dialogue with a vulnerable young person.
   Try to build trust and offer support and advice where needed.
- Be aware that a young person who has social or family connections to a radicalised group runs a higher risk of radicalising themselves. Carefully monitor their family and social situation and where possible discuss it with them and create a safe space for them to share their experiences. See their experience as an area of expertise, consult with them about it.
- Where possible, discuss this case with other professionals other social workers and youth workers, psychologists and psychotherapists, teachers and law enforcement personnel. Collaboration with other relevant specialists as part of multi-agency work is recognised as a valuable approach to tackling complex problems such as radicalisation of young people.<sup>27</sup>
- Respond proactively to any reports of racism or discrimination. First, explore the experience with the person reporting it. Is it genuine? Or has the person mistakenly attributed a negative experience to racism, when in fact simply the circumstances were not in their favour? In this case, pointing out the difference between actual and perceived discrimination is vital. Again, discuss these cases with other members of the community and the multi-agency group available.
- In cases where you agree that discrimination has taken place, make it clear to the person reporting it that there are legitimate means available to remedy the situation and redress the balance and make sure that these are used. People who have experienced discrimination sometimes have the tendency to feel that the negative emotions expressed by the person who discriminated against them are common



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<sup>27</sup> Sarma K. M. (2018), *RAN ISSUE PAPER Multi-agency working and preventing violent extremism I,* Radicalisation Awareness Network, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\_awareness\_network/ran-papers/docs/multi-agency-working-preventing-violent-extremism-042018\_en.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Young H., Holsappel J., Rooze M., de Wolf A., Russel J., Hasan U., (2014), *TerRa Toolkit. Community Approach to Radicalisation*, p. 11, https://terratoolkit.eu/

#### PRECOBIAS - Toolkit for Social Workers, Youth Workers and Mental Health Professionals

to their entire social group. Make sure to stress that the discrimination they have experienced does not in any way represent a general social view, but is the action and opinion of only one individual. Ensure that they feel supported and listened to.

- Provide access to legitimate means to address the justified or perceived unfairness that young people are experiencing. As explained in our free of charge online course,<sup>28</sup> people going up the first floor are those who want to counteract that perceived injustice. They are looking for potential ways to improve their situation by climbing the stairs. There is an important idea that can be extremely valuable in preventing and countering radicalisation and extremism: as a society or government, we could open up metaphorical doors for the individual to help them constructively deal with the perceived or actual discrimination and unfair treatment. This support could prevent them from searching for alternatives and possibly dangerous ways to address the feeling of frustration and helplessness, such as the acceptance or use of violence.
- How can we prevent people from feeling unjustly treated? Moghaddam suggested two solutions:
  - Provide possibilities for personal mobility: help people believe that they can achieve better social status by giving them opportunities to move up the social ladder and to improve their conditions.
  - Give them the opportunity to participate in meaningful and inclusive decision-making processes, with the goal to positively influence the situation of their group or actions with legal implications. If an individual feels that they can expect to be genuinely heard and actively involved in shaping their life opportunities, they would likely be more supportive of the established authority figures and less inclined to seek anti-social solutions for their problems.<sup>29</sup>
- In order to help an individual break the cycle of radicalisation it is also important to involve another young person they could relate to in the offered support system.
- It is also beneficial if there is a role model that the young person looks up to. This person can be someone from the same cultural or religious background (e.g. an imam) or a person of reference, trusted and respected by the young person (a social worker, a football coach, family members, friends and so on).
- Artistic activities, such as drawing or theatre pedagogy, are useful too. For example, showing a scene of people who are highly committed ideologically and asking to draw a parallel with their own actions could be a way to make young people realise the weight of their actions.



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<sup>28</sup> Bouko, C., Rieger D., Carton J., Naderer B., (2021), *Cognitive biases in the radicalization process*, Massive Open Online Course, Cluster 2 Session 1.

- Furthermore, it is important to work on improving the youngsters' critical thinking skills to prevent them from becoming manipulated by radical views.
- If someone is already on their way to becoming radicalised or at risk of it, meeting with someone who has already gone through deradicalisation process (e.g. an exit worker or professional) can also be helpful.
- Providing an opportunity to meet members of a group that an individual has prejudiced towards could also be helpful. These meetings should be well organised and could take different forms such as a living library (see one of the activities in the toolkit) or arts and culture and sporting events. For instance, football tournaments are a great way to bring people from different social groups together, particularly if fair play is put into focus. An example of how fair play can be encouraged among participants is the Football3 methodology.<sup>30</sup> Using sports as a tool to prevent radicalisation is highly recommended when working with young people.
- Organising sensitivity and intercultural training for young people can support the deradicalisation process at the early stages of radicalisation.
- The more radicalised the person becomes, the more individual work is needed and group activities become less effective. At advanced stages of radicalisation it is essential to involve specialists.
- It is crucial to be able to detect when a radicalised individual who harms their peers needs to be handled with the support of authorities, for example law enforcement personnel.
- It is also important to help young people develop critical thinking and media literacy skills in order to make them more resilient to online manipulation, fake news, conspiracy theories etc. Teaching young people about cognitive biases and their role in radicalisation is one of the important elements of building their online and offline resilience to extremism.



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#### **Deradicalisation or "EXIT" strategies**

Due to the fact that a radicalised individual is usually both a victim (of social processes, influence of others, difficult financial and family conditions, etc.) and a perpetrator (who resorts to and preaches violence, commits misdemeanours and crimes), the so-called "exit" activities are particularly noteworthy. These are multi-institutional, multi-organisational and multi-faceted social activities aimed at individuals and groups undergoing the radicalisation process. Their purpose is to provide such individuals or groups with the possibility to abandon extremist activities and support them in this process so that they are able to return to society at the end of the day and comply with social norms.

A typical EXIT strategy provides individual and targeted support for those who want to leave, for example, a neo-Nazi community. They are often offered the possibility to work with a professional (who may be available 24 hour a day, if needed) and are provided assistance when contacting government bodies and institutions. Exist workers cooperate with landlords, police and social services and offer support to families and loved ones of those who want to leave extremist communities. Activities are tailored to the situation of an individual client, but are usually focused on building for such a person a new identity not related to the radicalised community. These activities may include psychological and work training, helping with overcoming additions, but also practical activities, such as the removal of extremist tattoos, contact with authorities, etc. The duration of work depends on the situation. It usually takes from several months to several years. Some people who left radicalised communities due to EXIT programmes became educators themselves and help others on this path, using their own experience and deep understanding of the process. Similar actions can be undertaken for those who want to leave gangs and criminal networks.







## CASE STUDIES

#### **#**] David, a twelve-year-old student in Hungary

In 2012 a social worker was contacted by the district court, following the request submitted by a child welfare agency, and asked to examine the living conditions, mental state and parents' income of a teenager called David. The social worker, who was a member of the Roma community, told us the following story of David<sup>31</sup>:

"David's parents were divorcing at that time and the boy was living with his mother in the countryside. His father lived in a town close to the Balaton Lake. The court asked to examine the boy's situation because of the custody battle.

At first, I contacted David's mother, she was already in a new romantic relationship and she and David were living with her new boyfriend in his house. She mother said her marriage was very bad and she wanted to get out of it as soon as possible. One day she rented a car, packed her stuff and told David to get inside because they were going to the dentist's. The boy did not understand the situation, why their belongings were in the vehicle, but got inside and soon found out they were moving to live with his mother's new boyfriend. His mother already had a new job in the new town, working as a sales clerk and part-time being a Hungarian country singer. The house they moved into was absolutely in order, it had new furniture, four rooms, a big living room with a kitchen. Nevertheless, David did not feel comfortable there.

David was a fairly short, thin boy with short black hair. He was particularly well-mannered and polite, but I saw a little sad boy inside his eyes. David told me it was really not fair that his mother had tricked him into moving in with her boyfriend. He said his mother knew exactly how much he loved living with his father in that town. There were a lot of farm animals there, they had fields where they grew their own vegetables and didn't have to buy almost anything in stores. David also confessed he did not know his mother's new boyfriend personally before moving in with him. The teenager felt he was doing everything in his power to succeed at the new school but he felt isolated. This however didn't affect him that much because he remained in touch with his old classmates via the Internet and that meant a lot to him.



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The discussion I had with David took place in his room. It was a very casual conversation until the moment I saw a big original Hungarian Guard Movement<sup>32</sup> shirt pinned to the wall. In that split second my world stood still, I didn't know what to do, what to say. Luckily, I managed to compose myself so the boy did not notice my surprise and discomfort. I tried to end the conversation in a nice way and told him next time I would be coming with a colleague of mine.

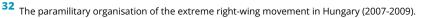
After the home visit I called the family care worker at Balaton (where David's father lived) and shared my insights about the boy's case. My colleague said that in my situation he would have been surprised too but the teenager was probably influenced by his father's love for the nation. I told him I believed the shirt I saw was a real original piece, probably purchased at a Hungarian Guard Movement's event. My co-worker and I discussed whether he would try to talk about this topic with the boy's father.

I was really bewildered since at that time the ideology behind the Hungarian Guard and the Movement for a Better Hungary – Jobbik<sup>33</sup> was spreading. I could not take David's case because I did not feel safe myself as a member of the Roma community.<sup>34</sup> I passed the case to my colleague but stayed in touch with him and we often discussed this case.

My colleague told me David didn't think there was anything wrong with the fact that he owned that shirt, it symbolised important things in his life. My colleague talked with David about negative effects of radicalised behaviour with David. The boy's parents were both involved in a struggle over custody of the boy. A lot of professionals in the social work were brought in to help with the case and every single one of them concluded that the boy wanted to stay with his father and his mother. The custody case took two years to settle. David remained an intelligent and well-mannered boy. Over these years my colleague tried to encourage David to stay away from the radicalised groups. For the most part he succeeded. Custody of David was eventually given to his father; however, at the end of the trial David became diabetic, which was probably the effect of stress induced by psychological factors. Later, I found out that David went to study at an agriculture school, had good grades and managed to stay away from extremist groups.

I would highlight two important lessons learnt from this case. One resonates with what one of my college teachers said: *"When you pay a home visit to a family, look around meticulously. This is a great way to get to know the family better and it gives you a chance to ask questions"*, for example about posters and other objects on the wall and their meaning. In David's case, if I had asked to look around his room





<sup>33</sup> The extreme right-wing party in Hungary (active from 2003).

<sup>34</sup> At that time a series of murderous hate crimes were commited against Roma people.



before talking to him, I would not have been so surprised later when the shirt caught my eye. Following this case I have tried to pay more attention to small details.

Honesty was also another important factor. Although I stepped down from the case, my colleague continued the truthful, honest conversations with the family and the boy. He asked very specific questions, for example: Why is this shirt important to you? How do you benefit from this group?"



### #2 Adam, a fifteen-year-old high school student who strongly sympathised with neo-Nazi ideas

In 2018 the guardianship office contacted a local child-welfare agency because they found out from the police that Adam<sup>35</sup> had committed vandalism during a party at the weekend. Since the case was about a minor, the guardianship office sought help from two social workers. One of them told us Adam's story.

"We contacted Adam's family to find out what exactly happened and to assess the boy's environment and the possible risk factors. These facts were important because we could recommend further measures to be taken if necessary (e.g. foster care) or we could close the case if there were no negative factors affecting the teenager.

The family lived in a house on the outskirts of the town, next to vineyards. The house was a two-storey building with three rooms. Adam and his mother were at home when we arrived. The mother was waiting for us, but Adam's face clearly showed we were not welcome. Adam was rather short and thin. His hair was cut at the back and on both sides of his head. He wore dark clothes – black skinny pants, a black leather belt with a Greater Hungary buckle on it, and a white tricot (singlet). His footwear were black steel-toed boots with white shoelaces.

During the conversation with Adam's mother, Marta,<sup>36</sup> we learnt that the family had moved to Hungary from Erdély (Romania) five years ago. The mother had two more older children. One was 26 and was incarcerated for aggravated assault and battery. The other child, who was 23 years old, had a baby who was being raised by the other parent. For a short period of time Marta raised her granddaughter but that situation caused a lot of tension in the house, so eventually the baby's father took care of her. Marta's husband passed away ten years ago and since then she had been raising her children on her



own. The family's only income was Marta's salary which was 130,000 Hungarian Forints (about 350 Euros) and the child support benefits for Adam, which amounted to 40,000 Hungarian Forints (about 110 Euros).

The family's living circumstances were modest. The upstairs room in the house was divided with a bookshelf, with Adam's room on one side and his mother's room on the other side. Since only the two of them lived under the same roof, they could fit comfortably. Walls in Adam's part of the room were filled with posters and badges with very radical slogans on them, for example the band Slipknot, a poster of Greater Hungary, Árpád stripes – a heraldic and vexillological configuration.

Marta told us that she only let her son go to a party once a month because they lived outside the town, public transportation was bad and she also feared for him at night. She knew about the vandalism and talked about it with Adam, warning him not to do it again. Marta admitted she knew that Adam had got in trouble before at parties, and she was fearful that he would cause further, more serious problems. She constantly warned him not to talk about the Roma community negatively because in every group and society there were both good and bad people.

Adam explained how one night after a party, while he and his friends were on their way home, he shattered a waste container. He emphasized that his friends weren't involved in this act. When asked why he did that he only replied that he became very agitated because on the other side of the street there was a group of several Roma people. Adam said they didn't hurt him, he was just annoyed with the fact they were physically too close to him.

During the shelter care hearing and at a case conference prior to that, Marta recounted all of the above mentioned situations in the same way. Adam's school teacher also testified that the teenager had been wearing "weird" clothes since the beginning of the school year, but she didn't pay so much attention to it. But after many people (police, child-welfare agency) approached her about Adam's behaviour, she realised that the steel boots with white shoelaces clearly indicated racist ideologies. After that incident, the teacher asked Adam not to wear this type of clothing and badges at school. I just want to highlight that Adam came to the court hearing in a shirt with a Slipknot label. Marta, Adam's mother, pleaded with her son to abandon these radical views. However, she was also aware that he behaved like this due to the family's situation - one of his siblings was in jail and the family was falling apart.

The child welfare agency ruled to put the boy in shelter care but with the following conditions: Adam and his family would have to



work together with the child welfare system and with all professionals involved in his case. After the hearing, numerous discussions were conducted with Adam, both at school and at his home.

We assumed Adam was clearly rebellious and he chose an extremist ideology to express himself. This is why during our talks with him we tried to look for new methods for him to express his dissatisfaction with life. The goal was to find certain attributes in him that would enable him to find acceptance and a sense of belonging with his peers, to feel he can positively contribute to the community. This task was not easy for us because in the beginning Adam talked back a lot, he was mostly irritated with the fact that he had to go through this process.

We tried to find out who his friends were and why he mingled with them, what kind of music he listened to, what kind of poems he read etc. We found out he listened to songs and poems which had no radical meaning (Petőfi Sándor: One night at home,<sup>37</sup> Zanzibár songs<sup>38</sup>). So we asked him to dd a drawing connected to the poem. We were very surprised when he drew the poem's writer and his mother and father, which the poem was about. We encouraged him to do other drawings and he drew the poem's writer again with his mother hugging him. We complimented him and asked him if we could show the drawings to his literature and drawing teacher. First he was sceptical about it because he thought everyone would make fun of him but the exact opposite happened. Both of his teachers gave him an excellent grade. Then something very interesting happened - he started to drift away from his friends with whom he used to hang out and shared radical interests. We agreed with Adam that we would show his drawings to Roma children and ask their opinions about them, and then we would share it with Adam. The feedback from the Roma children was very positive. Adam was at first a little doubtful about it but we could see it made him feel good.

We worked about half a year with Adam. During this time he did not have any trouble with the law and he stopped wearing extremist clothes to school. His teachers said they could see him change; Adam would still be heard talking obscenities, though with much less intensity than before. His mother said he helped around the house more and when he went to a party, he always came back before the curfew.

I believe that all the negative events that happened in Adam's family caused him to act out due to the lack of attention from family members. When we started having sessions with him and encouraged him to choose a different way to express himself, he began developing his self-esteem. We always gave feedback to his mother, Marta, who was a constant source of compliments in Adam's life and she

<sup>37</sup> A famous Hungarian poet.
<sup>38</sup> A Hungarian pop band.



supported him all the time. The school was also open to Adam's positive changes and encouraged him to hone his talents (drawing). Adam found a certain balance in his life thanks to the positive feedback and support he received. It is possible that his radical beliefs and behaviour might re-emerge. However, all I know is that he discovered a new perspective on life."



# #3 The conflict between two Roma groups in school

This case happened in a school where the majority of pupils were Roma. The interesting fact was that a conflict emerged between the Hungarian Roma pupils and the Romanian Roma pupils. The prejudices and stereotypes degenerated into such a big conflict that a social worker had to step in.

Considering that a lot of students were affected by the negative environment, group activities were chosen as a method for problem-solving. One method that was used was a gene-mapping game, where the social worker said some simple statements and the children had to raise their hands if the statements were true for them. The game made the two groups realise they actually had a lot in common.

The social worker's opinion was that even first graders (six and seven years old) could play this type of game, it just needs to be adjusted to their age and the level of understanding. The ideal number of participants for a group activity is ten people, with at least two (adult) teachers or trainers. If the conflict is very violent, in the verbal or physical way, the children who are the most responsible for the escalation of it (the "troublemakers") should be removed from the situation and follow individual sessions with professionals (for instance, a social worker).



### #**U** The radicalisation and deradicalisation process of Staszek Czerczak

The ability to notice and point out positive examples of turning someone away from the extremist path and reintegrating them into society is also important. This was the case with Staszek Czerczak.

"Now, we are but few and they laugh at us, but let us wait a few years and our numbers will grow from a hundred to several thousand", shouts a short-haired man through a megaphone. The group of 150–200 people includes Janusz Bryczkowski, Bolesław Tejkowski and Leszek Bubel. There is also Stanisław Czerczak, a young man from Gorzów Wielkopolski. He listens to the far-right leaders of that time with bated breath and applauds with the crowd. He feels the power. It is 11 November 1997. The centre of Warsaw.

"I come from an intellectual family, where we celebrated literature and art and hosted artists", says Czerczak about himself today. "I spent my childhood on the playground with children from working-class families and I felt like an outcast. The claim that radicalisation is limited to dysfunctional families is untrue. I was a boy interested in books and grunge music who grew up to be a neo-fascist radical."

He got a first taste of radicalisation from his older playmate: "He explained the workings of the world in a very simple way. He showed us the budding MTV channel, sneakers, jackets, cars that we naturally could not afford. We watched those products on television and started wondering why we couldn't have them as well. Searching for someone to blame, young people listen to the leaders who say: it is the fault of the European Union, they steal from us. It is the fault of the mythical Jew from New York who is reigning over banks. They are to blame for our lack of access to material goods."

How did he get out? For a woman. "When you meet other people, you may either get radicalised – as was the case when I came into contact with skinheads and football hooligans – or get out", says Czerczak today. "I managed to leave that group because of love. My



girlfriend at the time saw in me something more than neo-fascist insignia and gave me an ultimatum. I remembered the values brought from home and respect for fellow human beings.

But not everyone succeeds in leaving such a community. "When I follow the lives of my then comrades, I see that they are still part of the movement and became even more radicalised, went into politics or are doing time in jail," he says. "It took me more than ten years to be able to look at myself in the mirror, admit to myself who I used to be, what mistakes I made and accept it," sums up Czerczak.

Today, he holds meetings for young people and trains police officers and teachers. How did it start? "I met the late Marcin Kornak, the founder of the "Never Again" Association,"<sup>39</sup> says Czerczak. "His passion for social activities inspired me. He said that even on the scale of the country my experiences and my willingness to say that intolerance and extremism are bad, are important and valuable. He said that I should make use of my passion. He convinced me to talk openly about what I have been through."





<sup>39</sup> An independent anti-racist association, based in Warsaw, Poland. It fights racism, xenophobia and intolerance.



# ACTIVITIES

### 'US AND THEM'

| (I)         | OBJECTIVES:                | To explore in-group out-<br>group bias, to openly discuss<br>the meaning of stereotypes, | Ø        | TIME:              | 60-90 minutes  |
|-------------|----------------------------|--|----------|--------------------|--|
|             |                            | prejudice, discrimination and<br>to share related personal<br>experiences.               |          | SOURCES:           | Bouko C., Rieger D., Carton<br>J., Naderer B. PRECOBIAS<br>Project. (2021). <i>Cluster</i>     |
| ී<br>ජිපිපි | ТҮРЕ:                      | Group/individual activity.   |          |                    | <i>Four Session Two: In-group out-group bias.</i> Online MOOC and Toolkits for Social Workers. |
|             | AGE GROUP:                 | 15+  | نې<br>پې | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | flipchart, pens, paper,  |
| රිපිපි      | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 3-15   | -u-      | ALQUIALD.          | flipchart, pens, paper,<br>marker pen.   |

### DESCRIPTION

### EXERCISE #1

The participants are divided into four small groups. Each of the groups gets a topic to discuss. Topics can be given by the activity instructor but the group can also propose their own. Recommended topics are the following:

- belonging to a group
- stereotyping
- prejudice
- discrimination

The activity instructor can ask the participants to think about what stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, belonging to a group means in small groups. After five minutes, they can share their thoughts with the whole group. Everyone can share their ideas, what they talked about. If they have false ideas of the meaning of the words, the activity instructor can guide them with questions to find the right answers. Meanwhile, ideas can be written on the flipchart (but it is not necessary). Participants can be asked to give examples for the definitions too.



### **EXERCISE #2**

Once the meaning of the above words is clarified, the participants can be asked to do an individual exercise, by thinking about the following questions, and trying to answer them:

- What groups do you feel you belong to?
- If you belong to a group, is your group affected by some kind of stereotypes, prejudice? If yes, what are they? Do they apply to you?
- Have you ever been stereotyped or discriminated against? If yes, what happened? If you did that to someone else, what happened?
- Imagine yourself being in a discriminated position / in a situation when people are not addressing stereotypes towards you. How did you feel in these roles? (This helps develop emotional awareness and the participants can write these feelings on the flipchart and discuss it.)

After the participants have written down their thoughts, they can be asked to share them, if they want to. It is important not to push them to do so, because it is a sensitive topic. What is also important is to make them aware of the situations when someone doesn't fit in with a stereotype and share their personal experiences. It can be instructive to pay attention to what kind of arguments each participant brings into the discussion.

### **CLOSING**

The group activity ends with a reflection-circle, in which they can be asked what they have learnt, and what was new information to them.





| #Ľ            |                            | PRECOBIAS - Toolkit for Social Workers, Youth Workers and Mental Health Professionals |             |                    |  |
|---------------|----------------------------|---|-------------|--------------------|--|
|               |                            | WHO AM  | <b> </b> ?' |                    |  |
| (S)           | OBJECTIVES:                | To raise awareness of in-<br>group out-group bias and prejudice.                      | $\bigcirc$  | TIME:              | 15–20 minutes  |
| ු<br>පිපිපි   | TYPE:                      | Group/individual activity.  |             | SOURCES:           | Bouko C., Rieger D., Carton<br>J., Naderer B. PRECOBIAS<br>Project. (2021). <i>Cluster</i> |
| *****<br>6666 | AGE GROUP:                 | The first exercise: 12+,<br>the second and the third<br>exercise: 16+                 |             |                    | <i>Four Session Two: In-group out-group bias.</i> Online MOOC and Toolkits for             |
|               | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 8-12  | ~~~         |                    | Social Workers.  |
|               |                            |   | <b>ti</b>   | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | 1 pen, paper, flipchart,<br>projector  |

### DESCRIPTION

Depending on the group, the first activity can also be executed separately, if the group members do not have the patience or energy to play all three games in a row.

### **EXERCISE #1**

This game is more interesting and useful when the group members don't know the activity instructor personally. If it's possible, the instructor should only communicate minimally with the group members at the beginning of the session. The group is asked to sit in a semi-circle and have a pen and a sheet of paper in their hands. The instructor is sitting face to face with the group and asks the following questions:

- What is your first impression of me?
- What kind of internal attributes do you think I have?
- What is my family background like?
- What do I like and dislike?

If possible, these questions should be written on the flipchart. The participants have to write their answers for each question on the paper in front of them. Answering these questions should not take more than five minutes. During the exercise, group members should not talk to each other.

When they are finished, the sheets of paper are mixed and the participants have a minute to read aloud each other's written impressions. In this way, impressions stay anonymous and this can keep the participants from feeling shy and scared to share their opinions. It is vital for the instructor delivering this activity to be thick-skinned, in case they get distressing assessments.

After everyone shares their answers to the questions, the group activity instructor introduces themselves and the group can compare their ideas about them. This exercise requires the instructor and the group members to show mutual honesty and truthfulness about their opinions. The exercise demonstrates the "judging too soon" effect and its dark side.

To reflect, we should ask the following questions:

- Was it difficult to form an opinion?
- Was it more challenging to say the positive or the negative opinions?
- Was it a complicating factor that the person who you formed the opinions about was present?

### Alternative version

This game can also be played by showing a picture of someone that the group members don't know (instead of the activity instructor) and after they write down their answers, the leader introduces/talks about the person in the photo.



### **EXERCISE #2**

The participants are divided into four small groups. They are asked to think about the following terms and discuss them:

- belonging to a group
- stereotyping
- prejudice
- discrimination

If the conversation starts to stall, the activity instructor can ask the participants to think about what stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, belonging to a group means. They have five minutes for this and after that they share their thoughts with the whole group. Everyone can share their ideas, what they talked about. If they have false ideas of the meaning of the terms, the activity instructor can ask probing questions in order to try to elicit the answers. The presented ideas can be written out on the flipchart (but it is not obligatory). The participants can be asked to give examples for the definitions, too.

### EXERCISE #3

After defining the meanings of the above words, the participants can be asked to think about and try to answer the following questions:

- What groups do you feel you belong to?
- If you belong to a group, is your group affected by some kind of stereotypes,
- prejudice? If yes, what are they? Do they apply to you?
- Have you ever been stereotyped or discriminated against? If yes, what happened? If you did that to someone else, what happened?

After the participants have written down their thoughts, they can be asked to share them, if they want to. It is important not to push them to do so, because it is a sensitive topic. What is also important is to make them aware of the situations when someone doesn't fit in with a stereotype and share their personal experiences.

### **CLOSING**

The group activity ends with a reflection-circle, in which they can be asked what they have learnt, and what was new information to them.



## **'LIVING LIBRARY AND REFLECTION'**

|             | OBJECTIVES:      | To challenge stereotypes and prejudices young people may                                  | $(\mathbf{r})$ | TIME:              | 90-120 minutes  |
|-------------|------------------|---|----------------|--------------------|---|
|             |                  | have towards certain social groups or communities.  |                | SOURCES:           | Lorentzen, B. N., &<br>Planting, B. M. (2020,   |
|             |                  | To challenge a sense of<br>"us vs. them", which may<br>lead to hostility between          |                |                    | August 29). <i>Unjudge</i><br><i>someone.</i> The Human<br>Library Organization.                      |
|             |                  | different groups and result in<br>discrimination and violence,<br>by exploring the common | ĘĊĴ            | TOOLS              | https://humanlibrary.org/   |
|             |                  | ground and shared humanity between different groups                                       |                | REQUIRED:          | Chairs, tables, papers,<br>pen  |
|             |                  | through direct, personal<br>contact.  | [;=]           | OTHER<br>COMMENTS: | It is worth involving   |
| ු<br>පිපිපි | TYPE:            | Group session/individual session  |                |                    | young people in choosing<br>which social groups or<br>communities they want<br>to meet and learn more |
|             | AGE GROUP:       | 10-18   |                |                    | about   |
| රිපිපි      | NUMBER           |   |                |                    |   |
|             | OF PARTICIPANTS: | It depends on the time and<br>the number of "books"<br>(members of different<br>groups).  |                |                    |   |

### **DESCRIPTION**

### The "books"

The "books" are people with various attributes, different backgrounds, who agree to have an open conversation with others, and they are chosen on the basis of the social group or community they belong to and which experiences prejudice, for example: the Roma, Jewish, Muslim, LGBTQ+ community, people experiencing home-lessness, people with addictions, etc.



### #3

### The activity

One could imagine the activity like a real library. There are books – the people who agreed to a certain time-limited conversation, and there are catalogues from which the "readers" can choose. The readers rent the "books", and when they are finished with the conversation, they "give them back".

The activity instructor can prepare the participants and can suggest some examples, helpful questions to ask the "living books".

This activity may be organised during various types of events. It is important to provide a space where a reader can go read their book. It can also be organised like a real library, where every book is placed somewhere, and the readers can wander among the books. Attention must be paid to the preparation of the catalogues - what kind of book topics there are and for how long a book can be rented.

The social worker can also organise such an event on a small scale with their group by inviting some guests who belong to certain social groups.

### **CLOSING**

It is important to have a conversation with the participants of the activity after they finished the session, so if they had more questions pop into their minds or did not get some answers, they could ask. Additionally, during this reflection session, they have a chance to think about what they learnt, reflect on it. Everyone can share their experiences, opinions, and get answers to some of the remaining questions, because not everyone rented the same "books", and even if they did, they could have different interpretations of them.

When someone organises this activity, it is important to be properly prepared to conduct it.

To increase awareness of the youth group, they can be asked to make notes after the conversations, from a subjective point of view. For this exercise we can give colourful notepads with some thinking points. Here are some examples:

- What kind of experience was the activity for you?
- Did you have any fears before the activity started? If so, what were they?
- What did you expect from the conversation? Did you get what you wanted?
- Were there any surprises for you during the activity?
- Could you relate to anything that you heard about during the exercise?
- Was there something that spark your special interest during the activity, about
- What you would gladly hear, learn more?
- What kind of feelings did you have at the beginning of the session?
- What kind of feelings did you have at the end of the session?
- What was important for you during the conversation?
- What is something that you heard or learnt during the activity, that you think it would be good for others to hear as well?
- How did it feel like approaching a stranger and having a conversation with them?



|             | OBJECTIVES:      | To reflect on the concepts<br>of equality and fairness and<br>to become aware of the  | $(\mathcal{F})$ | TIME:              | 20-30 minutes  |
|-------------|------------------|---|-----------------|--------------------|--|
|             |                  | difference between them.<br>With this activity participants<br>can explore their own<br>behaviour, feelings, and<br>think about other people's<br>situations. |                 | SOURCES:           | Empowering Education.<br>(2021, February 9).<br>Social & Emotional<br>Learning Curriculum<br>  Mindfulness-Based,<br>Trauma Informed. https://<br>empoweringeducation. |
| ු<br>පිපිපි | ТҮРЕ:            | Group activity.   |                 |                    | org/   |
|             | AGE GROUP:       | 12-18   |                 |                    | Chilcoat, J. (2021). Fair Isn't<br>Always Equal: The Band<br>Aid Lesson. The Heritage  |
| රිපිපි      | NUMBER           |   |                 |                    | Institute. https://www.  |
|             | OF PARTICIPANTS: | max. 15   |                 |                    | hol.edu/uploads/essays/<br>Fair-Isnt-Always-Equal-<br>59821ca0e2e81.pdf  |
|             |                  |   |                 | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | band-aid (one per  |
|             |                  |   | ~~~             | REQUIRED:          | band-aid (one per  |

### DESCRIPTION

The activity was originally prepared as a school classroom activity but here you will be reading an adapted version of it, it does not have to take place at school. The session can be organised in any other environment.

The group activity instructor gives each participant a piece of paper with a type of injury written on it. They ask the participants to imagine that they have hurt themselves, but keep it secret what type of injury it is. Then the leader calls everyone by name and asks what their injury is. The injuries may range from small bruises, broken arms or legs to life-threatening conditions. If the group likes playing, the activity instructor can even ask the participants to act as if they had that injury. And for everyone the instructor says how unfortunate the injury is and puts a band-aid on the participants' wrist, whatever the imagined injury is (broken bones, cuts, falls, sprains, etc.). Obviously, not every injury needs the same level of attendance, but the participants are given exactly the same treatment which is not adequate for some of the injuries.



participant), paper, pen

The activity instructor then asks the participants the following questions:

- Did you get proper care?
- What would you have needed to be cured?
- Why isn't every form of care good for every injury?
- What happens if you do not get the adequate care needed for your recovery?
- What is necessary for everyone's healing and well-being?
- Can you provide more examples when a person does not get something they crucially need?
- How did you feel during the activity? How do you feel now?
- How is your injury now?
- Why do you think we did this exercise?
- Why did everyone get a band aid?
- How would the world look if we treated injuries the same way we did in this game?

At this point, the participants realise everyone was being treated equally but not fairly, because no one got what they actually needed. This can spark up a discussion about how everyone is different, in any sort of way, and how equality and equity are two different concepts.

### **CLOSING**

The activity can be finished by sharing own experiences from situations where they felt they weren't treated fairly in life. Time should be left for reflecting on each other's memories and discussing them.



#4

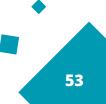
**PRECOBIAS - Toolkit for Social Workers, Youth Workers and Mental Health Professionals** 



DESCRIPTION

The bagel game is a good game to meet people. It is the game of choice if we want to test communication and connection among the people through a dynamic, rotational game. The game can be used in a new group to get to know each other and to break the ice, but it can also be used in a group where there are small factions dividing the group and we would like to change the group's dynamics.

The group should be divided into two smaller groups. One group makes a circle and the other makes a bigger circle around them. Make sure to leave wide gaps between the people standing in two circles. When the activity instructor turns the music on, both circles start to walk or dance in opposite directions. The leader then turns the music off and everyone stops walking around. People from both circles who stand in front of each other form pairs. They get a topic to discuss for two minutes. The conversation can go two ways, which the instructor decides: one way is to



let the pairs have a casual, open conversation and the other option is to set a time limit for them. The game could start with a time-limited conversation as it could be more effective and dynamic, and in the end the participants could switch to a casual conversation. In that way, one member of the pair talks for half of the time while the other patiently listens and reflects, and then they change roles. After two minutes, the music continues, the participants start to walk or dance around again, the game starts over and new pairs are formed.

The group activity instructor can spice up the atmosphere by playing vibrant music, and extend or narrow down the list of topics according to the group's characteristics and needs. The following examples can be used as topics:

- The last film I saw
- The last book I read
- My favourite type of music
- An activity that I like doing
- What sports do you like?
- A place that I visited and would recommend to everyone
- Where would I travel?
- Why am I here?
- The place where I grew up
- An important relationship in my life
- Talk about your family
- What ethnic group do you belong to? Talk about its characteristics.
- What traditions do you follow?
- What do you want to do when you grow up?
- My goals

Questions are ranked in order of difficulty, they can become more personal as the participants move forward in the game, for example the participants can start with the questions about films, then about life and in the end talk about family and life goals. The questions should be adapted to the age and interests of the group that is playing.



### **CLOSING**

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They can discuss the following questions:

- Did you communicate differently during the game than usually? In what way?
- What caused it?
- What did you feel while you were listening to and paying attention to the other person?
- What did you feel when the other person was giving you attention and listening to you?
- Did you learn anything new about someone in the group?
- Was there anything you had in common with someone in the group?
- Did you talk to someone with whom you usually don't communicate?
- Which was easier: continuously talking about yourself or listening in silence to someone else talking about themselves?



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|-------------|----------------------------|--|-----------------|--------------------|---|
|             |                            | <b>MIRRO</b>   | R'              |                    |   |
|             | OBJECTIVES:                | To develop empathy and a sense of connection with  | $(\mathcal{F})$ | TIME:              | 15-25 minutes   |
|             |                            | other people, to practise<br>non-verbal communication<br>in order to prevent a feeling<br>of social isolation which may<br>lead to radicalisation. |                 | SOURCES:           | Rudas, J. (1990) <i>Delfi<br/>örökösei.</i> Gondolat,<br>Budapest, 290.o. |
| ං<br>පිපිපි | ТҮРЕ:                      | Group activity.  |                 | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | pens, skewer (bamboo,<br>metal, wood, etc.)                               |
|             | AGE GROUP:                 | 12+  |                 |                    | metal, wood, etc.)  |
| පිපිපි      | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 2-30 (even number of<br>participants)  |                 |                    |   |

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### DESCRIPTION

This exercise can be used when the participants are already comfortable with each other and with physical interactions.

In the beginning there should be a conversation about the different roles the participants will have to play (leaders, followers). The group can be asked to select a leader and a follower from among their peers. What is good in each role and why is it important? We should also talk about the fact that during our lives we experience probably both of these roles and we can improve in them.

### **EXERCISE #1**

The group is split into pairs and their task is to face each other and put their palms together. One person in each pair is the "leader" and the other one is the "follower". The leader moves their hands in any direction, any way they want and the follower has to follow the leader, like a mirror reflection. The activity instructor tells them when to change roles.



In the next game they have to move the same way as earlier (one player reflecting the movements of the other one) but this time the pairs are holding a pen together between their palms. One member of the pair is the "leader" and the other is the "follower". The leaders can move their hands in any direction, and the follower has to follow to make sure the pen doesn't fall down.

### **EXERCISE #3**

The third exercise is played again without the pen, but the roles (leader, follower) are not said out loud, the pairs have to figure it out by non-verbal signs.

### **CLOSING**

After the games there is a reflection-circle where the participants can discuss the following questions:

- Did the pen fall? Who is responsible for the pen not falling?
- Was the game difficult for them? What was the most difficult part? What was the easiest part? What was fun about the game?
- Did they feel comfortable or not while playing? Which role did they prefer?
- How were the roles decided in exercise 3?
- Who or what is responsible for the successful outcome of the game?
- How could they help each other?





# 'DECIDE TO HAVE A GOOD DAY!'

| Ì           | OBJECTIVES:                | To raise awareness of negativity bias. |        | TIME:              | 90 minutes  |
|-------------|----------------------------|--|--------|--------------------|---|
|             |                            |  |        | SOURCES:           | Bouko, C., Rieger D.,   |
| ු<br>පිපිපි | TYPE:                      | Group activity                         |        |                    | Carton J., Naderer B.<br>PRECOBIAS Project.<br>(2021). <i>Cluster Five Session</i><br><i>One: Negativity Bias.</i> Online |
|             | AGE GROUP:                 | 12-18                                  |        |                    | MOOC and Toolkits for<br>Social Workers.  |
| පිපිපි      | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 3-40                                   | ۲<br>۲ | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | pens, paper, printed<br>version of the story, video<br>playback device (optional)   |

### DESCRIPTION

A story is told as part of the activity with a focus on the negativity bias, and while elaborating it we can search for ways to avoid being influenced by this cognitive bias.

### The story

The story is read by a volunteer from the group or the activity instructor.

"Anna wakes up the day after her birthday. She puts on the new shoes she had wanted for a long time and does her hair. Her brother makes her a big cup of coffee and she eats a slice of her leftover birthday cake for breakfast. They talk while she eats, then she leaves for school.

It is a sunny spring morning and Anna is reading the messages from her friends on her phone while walking through a park next to her school. She doesn't realise someone is walking towards her. Both Anna and the stranger are in a hurry and didn't pay attention to the outside world. She bumps into the stranger, who completely lashes out on her. A lot of people in the park start looking at the situation. Anna's good spirits go away and her mood instantly changes to bad as she hurries to school. When she gets to school, she hardly notices all the compliments her friends make about her new shoes. When Anna's best friend asks her what's wrong, she just says "It's a shitty day!" and goes to the lady's room. Anna feels angry during



*her classes, she can't even pay attention to the schoolwork and her bad mood sticks with her all day.* 

After she gets home, she slams the door behind her. Anna's mum walks up to her and says she has cooked lunch. While eating she talks about her day and asks what's wrong, but Anna only replies "Leave me alone". She doesn't speak with anyone all day. Her bad mood didn't go away until she fell asleep."

### EXERCISE #1

After the story is read, a discussion starts, which lasts about 10-15 minutes. The instructor can ask the following questions:

- What happened to Anna?
- Why was she in a bad mood? How did Anna's mood change during the day, what had an effect on her?
- What are the consequences of Anna bumping into the stranger? (It affects her mood: she is frustrated all day, impulsive, it affects her decision-making: she doesn't notice how her friends and family care for her).
- How did Anna feel at the beginning of the story compared to the ending?
- Give examples of situations where your get into a bad mood.
- Can you imagine the same story, but with a different ending where Anna is in a good mood?

### EXERCISE #2

Now the participants are divided into smaller groups (three to four people) and they take notes based on the following instructions (they have 15 minutes for it):

- Collect the positive aspects of the story (10 things; for this task, it is necessary to give the groups a printed version of the story).
- Collect the facts: for example: birthday, new shoes, cake for breakfast, gets a coffee from her sibling, the sun shines, it is springtime, friends like her shoes, her friend asks if she is okay and worries about her. But it can be a little more general, from an emotional perspective: people care about her, she is important to others, nice occasions=birthday, sunshine).
- Collect the facts that can help Anna have a better day (it is good if they come up with the idea, that she can focus on the positive things).
- Collect the moments from the whole day where Anna could have changed her day. Where could she have reacted differently than she did? (It is important to lead the discussion in a way that it is clear that Anna didn't do anything wrong, the answer is not to shout back to the person who called her names but to use some methods of changing her mood afterwards, to notice the good things happening around her.)
- Why do you think Anna didn't notice all the good things happening around her?

### **EXERCISE #3**

Small group exercise: role-play. It would be great if there were volunteers for this exercise and the ones who are not playing form the audience. (10 minutes for elaborating + 5 minutes for the play).

- The "cast": Anna, brother, classmate friend, friend, mum, stranger.
- Form the story so that in the end Anna is not in a bad mood. You can't take out roles, change environments or put in new roles. The goal would be to change
- Anna's reaction, attitudes towards certain events during her day.
- After the role-play everyone discusses the play and the activity instructor calls the attention on what kind of consequences this has.
- Take a short break.
- After the break everyone should try being in "Anna's shoes".

### **CLOSING**

Final discussion (20 minutes): the activity instructor talks about how this cognitive bias affects people and how we can protect ourselves from it. Example: focusing on the positive. If possible, they can show a video about this bias.

- Did someone experience this in their life? What happened? How did it feel?
- Did focusing on the positive things help you?
   Final question: what did you learn from this game? What did you find interesting? How do you feel now?





## **'THE RHETORIC OF LOVE '**

| (I)    | OBJECTIVES:      | To reinforce positive self-<br>esteem and to define positive |         | TIME:              | 15-20 minutes  |
|--------|------------------|--|---------|--------------------|--|
|        |                  | values.  |         | SOURCES:           | own source   |
| පේපීප  | ТҮРЕ:            | Group/individual activity.                                   | ÷<br>Š  | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | pens, sheets of paper  |
|        | AGE GROUP:       | 14-18  | ~~~     | REQUIRED.          | peris, sheets of paper   |
|        | NUMBER           |  | []<br>; | OTHER<br>COMMENTS: | This activity is   |
| ජ්පීපි | OF PARTICIPANTS: | 8-12   |         |                    | recommended for a<br>group of people who<br>already know each other<br>or at a later stage of a<br>training day. |

### DESCRIPTION

Everyone should write down, on a sheet of paper, single words or sentences that they believe best describe feelings of being important and loved. The participants should write these sentences in the second person singular, addressing them to the reader (e.g. You are loved because you always show that you care about your friends' well-being). If possible, the more examples the better. give the participants five-six minutes for it. It is important to make sure that their handwriting is legible. Ask the participants not to write their own names on the pieces of paper.

Then the activity instructor collects and mixes up the pieces of paper and hands them out to the participants. Everyone gets someone else's piece of paper. Then they form pairs and read the words or sentences from the pieces of paper out loud to each other. After both people in a pair have read what is written on the pieces of paper, they can talk about how they felt during the exercise and how often they hear similar words in their lives. Is it easier to praise someone or to offend them? Why?



### Alternative version

This activity can also be implemented as an "aquarium exercise". The participants sit in a circle and two of them go in the middle and talk there. Those who are sitting in the circle just observe how the person who gets the compliment reacts (e.g. smiles, blushes, etc.). This version is recommended for groups where the participants do not make fun out of those who are "on stage".

### **CLOSING**

The ending of the activity should be about sharing conclusions, feelings, opinions about the exercise with the whole group. Questions could be the following:

- Did anyone get their own statements?
- What kind of compliment would you like to hear the most?



### **SPIN THE BOTTLE**

| (A)    | OBJECTIVES:                | To realise how important<br>positive feedback,<br>compliments and kind words   | $\bigcirc$  | TIME:              | 20 minutes                             |
|--------|----------------------------|--|-------------|--------------------|--|
| රීපීපී |                            | are for one's self-esteem<br>and general well-being, to<br>practise giving compliments<br>and positive feedback, to<br>improve participants' self- | ٢<br>۲<br>۲ | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | flipchart, pens, paper,<br>marker pen. |
|        |                            | confidence.  |             | SOURCE:            | own source.                            |
| ප්පිපි | ТҮРЕ:                      | Group activity.  | Ŵ           |                    |  |
|        | AGE GROUP:                 | 12+  |             |                    |  |
|        | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 4-10   |             |                    |  |

### DESCRIPTION

The activity requires a bottle, which will be used exactly like in the popular game also known as "truth or dare" or "spin the bottle"; however, the theme is completely different.

The activity instructor is part of the circle as well. The group sits in a circle and the activity instructor spins the bottle first so there is no disagreement about who should start the game. The activity instructor starts the game by giving a compliment to the person the bottle points to. Then this person will also spin the bottle and has to make one compliment or give positive feedback about the new person the bottle points to. The compliment can be based on the personality but also can be about appearances as well. The game continues the same way. It is very likely that if they play for approximately 15 minutes, everyone will get their turn. It is not a problem if someone gets more than one turn but it is important that everyone has the chance to try to give and receive a compliment.

It is not easy to think of one positive, non-judgemental quality of another person, even more so in cases where the group members don't even know each other. But if they don't know each other, the challenge of the game is even higher because people mostly stereotype others even though they don't even know them. The activity instructor can refer to these issues at the reflection session. It should be noted that one compliment should be only used once.



 $\# \mathbf{S}$ 

After the "spinning the bottle" game the instructor should also sit in the circle and ask the group to discuss the following questions:

- How did you feel when you found out what the exercise was about?
- How did you feel when you gave compliments?
- How did you feel when you received a compliment?
- Did you learn something today? If yes, what are you taking with you?
- What do you think of giving compliments? What effect does it have on people?
- Which compliment did you like the most?



# **'RESTORING JUSTICE'**

| Ĩ           | OBJECTIVES:                | To explore the notion of<br>restorative justice and<br>to apply it in practice. To<br>address situations and<br>issues linked to injustice or<br>unfair treatment and to try to<br>restore and provide a sense<br>of agency as the sense of<br>being treated unfairly and<br>not being able to help it may<br>lead to radicalisation.  | <del>نۇ</del> نى<br>ك | TIME:<br>TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | 60-90 minutes, depending<br>on the size of the group<br>and the number of<br>smaller groups (three to<br>five people)<br>sheets of paper, pens<br>(black), board |
|-------------|----------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| ු<br>පිපිපි | TYPE:                      | Group/individual activity.   | []]                   | OTHER<br>COMMENTS:          | When working in small  |
|             | AGE GROUP:                 | 16+  |                       | comments.                   | groups, if possible make<br>sure that the groups are   |
| රිපිපි      | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 3-6  |                       |                             | mixed, for example that<br>close friends are not in<br>the same group. It is more<br>efficient to do this activity   |
|             | SOURCES:                   | Learning For Justice. (2014).<br>Toolkit for Restoring<br>Justice. Teaching <i>Tolerance</i><br><i>Magazine</i> , <i>47</i> . https://www.<br>learningforjustice.org/<br>magazine/summer-2014/<br>toolkit-for-restoring-justice<br>Centre for Justice &<br>Reconciliation. (n.d.).<br><i>Restorative Justice.</i> Retrieved<br>30 March 2021, from<br>http://restorativejustice.<br>org/#sthash.xNqVxwxA.<br>dpbs<br>Foresee Research Group.<br>(2015, August 27).<br><i>Iskolai visszafogadó kör</i><br>[Video]. YouTube. https://<br>w w w. y o u t u b e. c o m /<br>watch?v=aLPHFNgxE98<br>Peacemakers. (n.d.). <i>How</i><br><i>to have a restorative chat.</i><br>[Image]. Solvingbehaviour. |                       |                             | when the participants<br>themselves and the<br>activity instructor know<br>each other.   |



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com/

https://hu.pinterest.

65

#### **EXERCISE #1**

The activity instructor tells the group that they will talk about justice - what it means to them and how they can deal with issues in order to make sure that justice is being done, to them and other people. Ask the participants to take two-three minutes and individually think about what justice means for them and about situations in which they felt they were treated fairly and unfairly. Next, ask them to take five minutes to discuss their ideas in pairs. After they finish conversations in pairs, ask them to share their reflections with the group and wrap up the discussion, harvesting their ideas and underlining the main aspects of the notion of justice. It is important not to share the whole stories, just the impressions and thoughts connected to the topic.

Next, the activity instructor divides the group into small groups of three people and asks each group to come up with a situation where they felt they or other people had been treated unfairly. First, the trainer can ask them to think about other people's situation and then they can ask them to think about their own experiences. The scenarios may be based on a problem that has occurred in the classroom or their lives. The activity instructor asks the participants to prepare a role-play based on this situation that they will present to other groups.

After the groups made up their scenarios, each group presents their role-play in front of the whole class. During the role-playing the viewers should write down their thoughts and questions regarding the scenes. After the presentation of each group, the activity instructor first asks the 'actors' how they felt while playing, then the remaining groups talk about how they felt watching the play. Next the entire group can briefly discuss what could have been done differently in each of the situations in order to do justice to the people involved. Referring to what the participants said, the activity instructor introduces the concept of restorative justice, underlining three big ideas of restorative justice:

- **#1** Repair: the wrongdoing causes harm and justice requires repairing that harm;
- **#2** Encounter: the best way to determine how to do that is to have the parties decide together;
- **#3** Transformation: this can cause fundamental changes in people, relationships and communities.



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The activity instructor asks the participants to return to their groups and to think of a different development and an ending of their situations, based on the main ideas of restorative justice discussed. How could justice be restored and the community healed in their situations? Then he/she asks each group to present their alternative versions of the situations.

Depending on how much time can be spent on this part of the activity, the group can discuss all situations or focus only on a selected one or two. The participants can discuss together the following questions:

- How do you think restorative justice is beneficial to the people, community?
- What elements of restorative justice seem particularly challenging, especially in your environment?
- Describe a situation from your home or school in which you think a restorative justice approach might have helped.





### 'ANALYSING A PROPAGANDA POSTER'

| Ì           | OBJECTIVES:                | To analyse a propaganda poster, raising awareness of manipulation in the media. | P  | TIME:    | 60 minutes  |
|-------------|----------------------------|---|----|----------|---|
|             |                            |   |    | SOURCES: | Lorentzen, B. N., &   |
| ී<br>පිපිපි | ТҮРЕ:                      | Group activity.   |    |          | Planting, B. M. (2020,<br>August 29). <i>Unjudge</i><br><i>someone.</i> The Human   |
|             | AGE GROUP:                 | 15+   |    |          | Library Organization.<br>https://humanlibrary.org/<br>The European Youth  |
| ප්පිරි      | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 4-25  |    |          | InformationandCounsellingAgency(ERYICA).(2018, June18).Liaisons: A toolkitforpreventingviolentextremismthroughyouthinformation.GermanPreventionCongress.https://www.praeventionstag.de/nano.cms/daily-prevention- |
|             |                            |   | ĨĴ | TOOLS    | news/details/2926   |

**REQUIRED:** 

sheets of paper, pens, propaganda posters, printed-out pictures

#### DESCRIPTION

The activity instructor collects propaganda and non-propaganda posters from the Internet: film posters, commercial posters, political ads, etc. and prints them out. The number of printed copies depends on how many small groups will be formed. The groups will compare these posters. The participants are divided into small groups. They are asked the following questions: What do you think of when you hear the word "propaganda"? What does it mean to you? The activity instructor asks for synonyms and writes them on the flipchart. Then he/she hands out the posters to the groups. Each group gets three-four posters.

The small groups should discuss the following questions regarding the posters:

- How does it make you feel?
- What characteristics do all the posters have in common?
- Which of the posters are examples of propaganda? Why?
- What is the goal of each poster? Does it encourage you to do something?

For every small group, a spokesperson shares their group's thoughts, they present the poster they have picked as an example of propaganda in their groups and explain what makes them think so.

The posters that are selected as examples of propaganda should be put in front of the groups so that everyone can see them. The participants can discuss the following points:

- What function does propaganda have?
- Share reasons why it is good and bad.
- The whole group creates one definition all together.

In the end of the group activity instructor the reads their own written definition about the topic and shares it with the group.

### Signs of propaganda

- Simplifies a complex problem.
- Creates an image of a big common enemy.
- Uses one perspective only, like it is the only one.
- Manipulates by intimidating.

### **EXERCISE #2**

The small groups are asked to look for propaganda posters online. After each group has found two to three examples, they share it with the others.

### **CLOSING**

The following questions can be asked:

- When and where do we come across the above mentioned examples of prop-
- aganda?
- What effect do they have on our lives?
   Who are the people that use these tools? (politicians, religious groups, etc.)

The activity instructor can also provide some examples if the participants do not come up with any.



PRECOBIAS - Toolkit for Social Workers, Youth Workers and Mental Health Professionals

| 'THE X FILES' |                            |   |            |                    |   |  |
|---------------|----------------------------|---|------------|--------------------|---|--|
| (A)           | OBJECTIVES:                | To raise awareness of picture superiority effect. | $\bigcirc$ | TIME:              | 40-45 minutes   |  |
| ු<br>පිපිපි   | ТҮРЕ:                      | Group activity.                                   |            | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | three printed files, pens,<br>sheets of paper   |  |
|               | AGE GROUP:                 | 12+   |            | SOURCES:           | A boy crying for his<br>loss photo. (n.d.).   |  |
| 688           | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 3-20  |            |                    | [Photography]. Unsplash.<br>https://unsplash.com/<br>photos/NPmR0RblyhQ<br><i>Family Doing Grocery</i><br><i>Shopping.</i> (n.d.).<br>[ P h o t o g r a p h y ] .<br>Pexels. https://www.<br>p e x e l s . c o m / p h o t o /<br>family-doing-grocery-<br>shopping-3985062/<br>Planting, B. M., Lorentzen,<br>B. N., Lorentzen, B. N.,<br>& Planting, B. M. (2020,<br>August 29). Unjudge<br>someone. The Human<br>Library Organization. |  |

https://humanlibrary.org/ Bouko, C., Rieger D., Carton J., Naderer B.

Session Two: The Picture Superiority Effect. Online MOOC and Toolkits for

Project.

Five

PRECOBIAS

(2021). Cluster

Social Workers.

### **DESCRIPTION**

#### EXERCISE #1

During this activity the participants are split into three groups. Each group gets one document. On the document there is a text either with or without a picture attached to it. The text is the same in each document, the only difference is in the pictures attached to them. The pictures supplement the text with emotions and additional meanings. One text does not have a picture attached to it, while the other two do have pictures but different ones. Each group only sees the text and the pictures in their document.

The instructions are the following: in the small groups, collect all the impressions, thoughts, associations for your document and write them down. You can answer the following questions:

- What kind of feelings did it evoke in you?
- What kind of story do you think might be behind the picture?

Then each group presents their thoughts to the other two groups without showing them the file, the text or the picture. It should be highlighted that they cannot read out exactly what is written on their file. Presumably, the pictures evoke different meanings, emotions and stories than the texts, so each group's report will be different. After all the groups share their impressions, they can show their files to the other groups and everyone will realise they had the same text.

The activity instructor asks the participants the following questions:

- What do you think about the use of pictures in the media?
- How do they influence our perception or understanding of the text?

Based on the discussion, the participants discover the concept of the picture superiority effect, the activity instructor supports them in this process and guides them in their understanding of this cognitive bias.



### **EXERCISE #2**

After describing the correct definition, the participants are divided into three groups again and they have to use their smartphones to search for examples of the picture superiority effect on the Internet. The activity instructor can give them specific feelings for which they have to find pictures as example: disgust, fear, happiness.

The instruction is to share recently discovered memes and funny advertisements with their peers. This part can be skipped if the participants don't have or cannot use smartphones in the classroom.

After each group found two-three memes and advertisements related to this topic, they can share them with the whole group and have a discussion about them. Each group has five minutes to talk about their chosen memes and advertisements. The following questions can be discussed:

- Why did you choose this picture?
- How does it make you feel?
- What comes to your mind when you look at it?
- Does it correspond to the text it accompanies?



#12



The following pictures can be used for the first part of the activity:

#12





#12

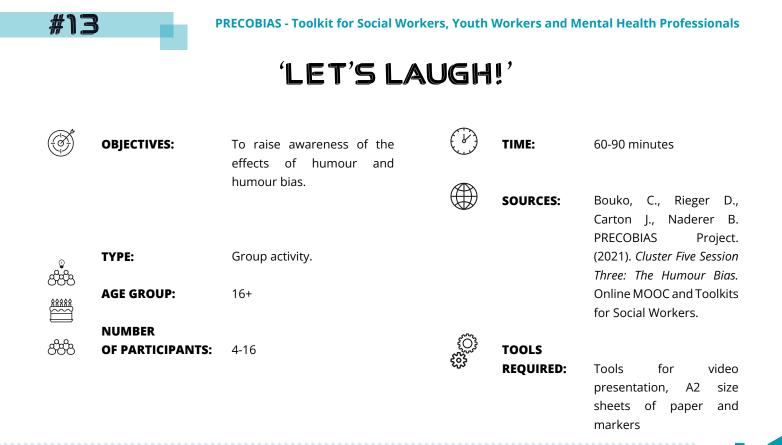


74

#12

# Running out of bread





**DESCRIPTION** 

#### **EXERCISE #1**

The activity instructor shows a funny video to break the ice and after showing the video they can say how we always need a good laugh: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9MAmWnOznl&ab\_channel=MrBean

#### **EXERCISE #2**

The activity instructor asks the participants to take five minutes to draw a funny situation or something that has made them laugh recently and then each participant shares their drawing. This task can be difficult for people who can't draw well so the activity instructor can bring comic books and hand them out to the group in case someone needs a little help or inspiration. The activity instructor can ask who wants to draw and put them in pairs with people who don't want to draw, so they could think of a situation and draw it together. This way they would have more courage to present their drawings and funny stories.



#### **EXERCISE #3**

The participants are then split into two groups to participate in the "activity game". This is a well-known game where one of the members of each group tries to describe a phrase written on the card to his/her peers without saying out loud the word itself. The activity instructor can limit the time to one-two minutes, during this time each group should find out what is written on the card. The groups have to figure out which benefit is described by their friends from the group.

There is one benefit of humour mentioned in each of the five activity cards (prepared previously by the activity instructor):

- Support memory
- Increase interest
- Positive evaluations
- Reduce negative emotions
- Increase energy levels

#### CLOSING

Once the activity game is finished, the activity instructor can move on and define the humour effect, relating it to the benefits, applications and how humour bias can lead to misuse of humour to persuade the audience. This may be followed by giving examples of situations where humour helps.





### WHAT DO WE SEE AND HOW DO WE SEE IT?'

**OBJECTIVES:** 

16+

To raise awareness of picture superiority effect.  $(\mathcal{S})$  TIME:

40-60 minutes

| ු<br>පිපිපි | TYPE: | Group activity. |
|-------------|-------|-----------------|
|-------------|-------|-----------------|



TOOLS **REQUIRED:** 

PPT with a news article or printed articles, A4 paper and pens for note-taking

**AGE GROUP:** 

NUMBER පිහිදි **OF PARTICIPANTS:** 10-12

SOURCES:

Green, M., & Roberson, R. (2017, May 10). QUIZ: How Good Are You At Detecting Bias? (with Lesson Plan). KQED. https://www.kged.org/ lowdown/26829/quiz-how-good-are-you-atdetecting-bias-with-lesson-plan Bouko, C., Rieger D., Carton J., Naderer B.

PRECOBIAS Project. (2021). Cluster Four Session Three Text one: The Confirmation Bias. Online MOOC and Toolkits for Social Workers. News articles about masks:

1. Joyner, D. (2020, August 12). The mask won't save you. Street Sense Media. https://www. streetsensemedia.org/article/the-mask-wontsave-you/#.YFnEBJ1Arrd

2. The Associated Press. (2020, August 27). Does a face mask protect me, or just the people around me? AP NEWS. https://apnews.com/ article/16cc7a31a327820b9bd1e56a89df5d49

Sanchez, G. R., & Vargas, E. D. 3. (2020, August 31). American individualism is an obstacle to wider mask wearing in the US. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/ up-front/2020/08/31/american-individualismis-an-obstacle-to-wider-mask-wearing-in-theus/



#### DESCRIPTION

#### **EXERCISE #1**

This activity takes about 10 minutes. The activity instructor starts the session with a fun activity (related to the confirmation bias) as an ice breaker. The activity instructor says "Let's do a very simple but fun activity in which we will check what we see and how we see it." Then the activity instructor asks everyone to participate in this activity and divide them into Spring Group and Autumn Group. The Spring Group will be asked to wear sunglasses while standing with their faces towards a wall in the room and notice the colour of the wall through their sunglasses. The Autumn Group (without sunglasses) will also be asked to face the same wall in the room and notice its colour.

The activity instructor asks the Spring Group (wearing sunglasses): "What colour is the wall you see?" and the participants can for example say that the wall colour is "brown" or "grey". The activity instructor will ask the Autumn Group the same question and the answer may be different, for example "white".

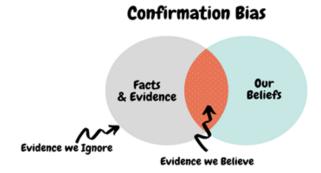
The activity instructor then adds: *"But it's the same wall, right? How come it has two different colours for different groups?"* 

Next the activity instructor tells the Spring Group to take off their sunglasses and asks them: "*What is the colour of the wall now?*" Participants may now give the same answer as the Autumn Group.

The activity instructor asks the whole group "What difference did you notice with and without the sunglasses?" Both groups share their opinions and experience of this activity. Then the activity instructor explains that this is an example of how we sometimes see things differently depending on the colour of our sunglasses. The sunglasses here are used as a metaphor for the beliefs we hold as individuals. These beliefs help us see or understand things in our own way, without putting much effort in it. In our everyday life we see many things around us through sunglasses (our beliefs) so that we can understand what we see around us easily. Before making definitive judgements about different things, we should take off the sunglasses that cover our minds and try to look at things, such as facts, in a more open and neutral way. Just like the participants who took off their sunglasses and figured out that the wall colour had a different colour than when they looked at it with their sunglasses on.

#### **EXERCISE #2**

This activity is about defining the confirmation bias. The activity instructor can draw the diagram below on a board or a flipchart to help the participants understand the concept.



Confirmation bias is the human tendency to selectively gather and process information in order to confirm our assumptions and preconceptions, whether they are true or not.

In other words, we often tend not to learn in a rational way. We don't take in information and then make an objective judgment. Instead, the way we learn may often be influenced by what we already know and who we are.

#### **EXERCISE #3**

This activity takes about 20 minutes. The activity instructor prepares and displays PowerPoint slides or flipcharts summarising the arguments presented in three articles taken from the media on a controversial and topical issue - mask-wearing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The articles which can be used as an example are the following (see the links above in Sources):

- The mask won't save you
- Does a face mask protect me or just the people around me?
- American individualism is an obstacle to wider mask-wearing in the US



The activity instructor asks the participants to think about these statements and to write down further convincing arguments and look for evidence to state their points, for example scientific studies and research, for each piece of news. They can use smartphones to search for scientific evidence.

The activity instructor asks the participants for a show of hands for each news where people are convinced by the information/argument presented. Depending on the number of people who are convinced or not convinced, the activity instructor divides the participants into groups of three to four people in a way that each group has at least one or two members who are either for or against given arguments (for example, two people in favour of them and two people who oppose them).

In groups the participants discuss the reasons for their positions. They are asked to consider the validity of opposing arguments instead of dismissing them. The activity instructor can ask:

- Why did you find certain arguments more convincing than others?
- Are you able to convince your group members who have a different opinion than you?

Each group discusses these questions for about 10 minutes and writes down their answers in order to be able to present them to the other groups.

#### **CLOSING**

#JU

The activity instructor starts the conversation by asking the whole group the following questions:

- Has anyone's position changed following the discussion in groups? Why? How?
- Why did you find certain arguments convincing and other ones not convincing?
- How is this activity related to confirmation bias?

This will lead to a discussion about how to identify and be aware of one's own confirmation bias. The examples of the actions that we can take in order to challenge our own confirmation bias can be as follows:

- Check the sources of the news we read: examine the purpose of the information that you see.
- Consider a story from a different (than your usual) perspective or even several perspectives.
- Be open to be wrong, to be challenged in your existing views.
- Discuss your thoughts on a given issue with others.



### 'WHO IS CREDIBLE?'

|             | OBJECTIVES:                | To raise awareness of authority bias.  | TIME:              | 45-60 minutes   |
|-------------|----------------------------|--|--------------------|---|
|             |                            | Group/individual activity.             | SOURCES:           | Bouko, C., Rieger D.,<br>Carton J., Naderer B.<br>PRECOBIAS Project.                                  |
| ු<br>පිපිපි | ТҮРЕ:                      | 16-24                                  |                    | (2021). Cluster Four Session<br>Two Text Two: Authority<br>Bias. Online MOOC                          |
|             | AGE GROUP:                 | 3-15                                   |                    | and Toolkits for Social<br>Workers.   |
| රිපිපි      | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | Individual session or group<br>of 5-10 | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | Paper and pens for each<br>individual, device to<br>display the PowerPoint<br>presentation or printed |
|             |                            |  | <br>               | pictures  |

#### DESCRIPTION

#### **EXERCISE #1**

The activity instructor prepares a PowerPoint presentation to show to the participants. They can also print out the pictures used in the activity to display them to the group. The participants can all sit down on the floor or on desks since the chairs will be used as props later in the activity. In the PowerPoint presentation there are statements next to pictures of various people that can be judged as credible or not.

The activity instructor says: "I will show you some statements we found in various sources next to the people who said them" and shows the presentation. He or she then gives pens and sheets of paper to each person and ask them to rate on a scale of 1-10 how much credibility they give to each statement. In this scale 1 means not credible at all and 10 absolutely credible and trustworthy. Each statement should be examined individually. The participants could put chairs in a line and vote by standing next to the selected seat (people willing to assign the lowest score would be on the left and people willing to assign the highest score would be on the right).



Statements such as the following examples can be used in the activity:

- Certain monkeys could be as smart as 12-year-old humans [a picture of scien-
- tists in white coats].
- There is a high possibility life forms are developing on Mars right now [a picture of astronauts at a desk in NASA].
- I predict gasoline-powered cars will no longer be produced by 2050 [a picture of Elon Musk].
- Germany will leave the European Union [a picture of a regular adult man in casual clothing].
- Smoking cannabis could help people with anxiety [a picture of high school students in casual/alternative clothing].
- Einstein's "E=mc2" theorem is being considered as actually being false all along [a picture of a math teacher in front of a whiteboard].
- Coronavirus-related restrictions will last until 2023 [a picture of a regular adult woman in casual clothing].

#### **EXERCISE #2**

After all the participants who wanted to participate in the discussion expressed their opinions, the activity instructor asks them the following questions :

- Out of all the people who were shown next to the statements, who was the most credible and reliable to you and why?
- Who was the least credible or reliable and why?
- Do you think the people next to the statements affected the way you perceived the credibility of the presented statements? (*This question can be asked if it was not discussed as part of the previous question*).

After this question, the activity instructor can comment that the fact that someone was considered to be an authority figure in a certain area (for example scientists, Elon Musk) may have influenced the participants' opinions. At this point, the activity instructor should also tell the group that all of the statements were equally fake and ask the participant the following questions and note down the answers on a flipchart:

- What makes someone reliable in your opinion? (flipchart list)
- What attributes can you assign to a reliable person?

The participants can even choose attributes for each other so that their confidence can be boosted.



#### **EXERCISE #3**

Finally, the activity instructor presents the definition, characteristics and effects of the authority bias. The most important lesson learnt for the participants is to pay greater attention to the information itself and not to its communicator.

- Try to remember, did it ever happen to you that you trusted someone without analysing the content of what he/she said just because he/she was an authority person?
- Why do you think celebrities are hired for commercials? Because people tend to trust and admire them more, so there is more chance they will believe what they are saying. It is similar, for example, with toothpaste advertisements with actors pretending to be doctors and wearing white coats.

After the participants have written down their thoughts, they can be asked to share them, if they want to. It is important not to push them to do so, because it is a sensitive topic. What is also important is to make them aware of the situations when someone doesn't fit in with a stereotype and share their personal experiences. It can be instructive to pay attention to what kind of arguments each participant brings into the discussion.

#### **CLOSING**

Finally, the participants can be asked to imagine the same recommendations that were brought up before during the activity coming from the people they assume to be the least credible.





### WHICH ONE DO YOU PREFER?'

|             | OBJECTIVES:                | To raise awareness<br>of bandwagon effect,<br>conformity effect and peer |      | TIME:              | 35-90 minutes  |
|-------------|----------------------------|--|------|--------------------|--|
|             |                            | pressure.  |      | SOURCES:           | AschConformityExperiment.(2007,December22).[Video].YouTube.https://w w w . y o u t u b e . c o m /   |
| ු<br>පිපිපි | ТҮРЕ:                      | Group/individual activity.   |      |                    | watch?v=TYIh4MkcfJA  |
|             | AGE GROUP:                 | 10+  |      |                    | Bouko, C., Rieger D.,<br>Carton J., Naderer B.   |
| රිප්පි      | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 10-25  |      |                    | PRECOBIAS Project.<br>(2021). <i>Cluster Five Session</i><br><i>One Text One: Bandwagon</i><br><i>Effect.</i> Online MOOC<br>and Toolkits for Social<br>Workers. |
|             |                            |  |      | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | A room, device to<br>display the PowerPoint<br>presentation, Internet<br>access  |
|             |                            |  | [;=] | OTHER<br>COMMENTS: | This activity can<br>also be used as an<br>icebreaker.   |
| 1111111     |                            |  |      |                    |  |

#### **DESCRIPTION**

#### **EXERCISE #1**

The activity instructor prepares PowerPoint slides with the examples below to be used for this activity. In case there is no computer or other display option, printed pictures can also be used or the activity instructor can read the examples aloud. When the activity instructor explains the exercise, the participants can all stand up or sit on the floor. The activity instructor tells the group that they will do a simple exercise, the participants will be shown two images and will then be asked which one they like more. There is no right or wrong answer. The participants will have to stand up and go to the right or left side of the room, depending on which option they choose. For example, if they prefer blue, they go to the right side of the room; if they prefer green, they go to the left side. The exercise can be done in up to 10 rounds, with simple topics, for example: "Do you prefer...?"

- Lion or tiger?
- Cat or dog?
- Sweet or salty?
- Spring or autumn?
- Guitar or piano?
- Football or basketball?
- Breakfast or dinner?
- Hot or cold weather?
- Tea or coffee?

Depending on the age group, the topics may be different e.g. music, films, actors, etc. If the participants like this game and have more ideas, they can ask further questions.

#### **EXERCISE #2**

After the first exercise is finished, the activity instructor asks the participants what they have experienced during the exercise. What made them choose one option and not the other? Probably some will mention that they were influenced by the choices made by other people. If they don't mention it, then the activity instructor can ask the following questions:

- Did you hesitate between two sides? What made you decide to choose one side and not the other?
- Did you change your decision at any time?
- Did you end up in a group where you didn't actually belong to?
- Did you go to one side because your friend also went there?
- Did you notice that the majority influenced your choice as well?
- How did it feel when you voted with the majority? How did it feel when you voted with the minority?



#### **EXERCISE #3**

The activity instructor shows a video presenting Asch's experiment (if there are no subtitles, the activity instructor should explain what is going on in the video in order for the participants to understand it.

If you have a possibility, try to replicate the experiment with your group. To do this see our Toolkit for Teachers, Lesson 7.

The activity instructor should emphasise that if a person follows the majority while deciding on an answer that is obviously incorrect, we should really take the influence of the majority seriously. The group should be encouraged to have a discussion about the video, letting the members of the group share their opinions and feelings about it.

The activity instructor can ask the following questions:

- What do you think of people in the experiment who followed the majority?
- Why do you think they did that?
- Do you believe you would do the same?
- Do you think it would be difficult to go against the majority and be the only one choosing the right answer?
- Have you ever been in a situation that reminded you of this experiment?
- What are other situations in which bandwagon effect could occur?

In this activity it is worth underlining that bandwagon effect stems from:

- a desire to be right and trusting the majority to be right,
- a fear of exclusion and a need to be part of the majority.

The activity instructor tells the participants that bandwagon effect is part of social life and that they are exposed to it every day. It is normal to follow the majority but they should still be careful about it because following the majority could lead to doing things that are simply incorrect or wrong, like in Asch's experiment. We shouldn't either be afraid to think for ourselves and express our opinions or preferences.

#### **CLOSING**

The activity instructor can ask the participants to reveal something about themselves that is probably not true for others or represents an unpopular opinion. This experience of not conforming to the opinions held by the majority can be very liberating.





### 'THE GOOD OLD DAYS'

| (A)                | OBJECTIVES                               | To raise awareness of rosy retrospection.                             | $\bigcirc$ | TIME:              | 30-45 minutes   |
|--------------------|--|---|------------|--------------------|---|
| 0<br>8888<br>***** | TYPE:                                    | Group activity.   |            | SOURCES:           | Bouko, C., Rieger D.,<br>Carton J., Naderer B.<br>PRECOBIAS Project.  |
| 2000<br>20000      | AGE GROUP:<br>NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 14+<br>6-20 (the participants should<br>pair up; if the number in the | ÷          |                    | (2021). Cluster Four<br>Session Three Text Two:<br>Rosy Retrospection. Online<br>MOOC and Toolkits for<br>Social Workers. |
|                    |  | group is uneven, there can be a group of three)                       |            | TOOLS<br>REQUIRED: | Questions written on<br>sheets of paper, a hat<br>or bowl for each group<br>where the written                             |
|                    |  |   | []]        | OTHER<br>COMMENTS: | questions are put.<br>This activity can also be<br>used as an icebreaker<br>and to support positive<br>thinking.          |

#### DESCRIPTION

#### **EXERCISE #1**

The activity instructor introduces the activity to the group: "Today we will talk about the past, both the recent past and the distant past. I will ask you to think about a really happy memory from your past: for example a fun holiday trip, a certain time in your life when you felt happy, a memorable event or experience".

The participants will have to think about a specific happy memory and its details. After a moment of reflection, the participants can get into pairs (or groups of three, if the number of people is uneven) and share their memory with each other. After they are finished, each pair or group can pull random questions written on



scraps of paper from a hat and discuss the question together. The questions can be the following:

- In what way were you different back then compared to the present?
- What advice would your "past self" give to your "present self"?
- Compare the present with this happy memory. How do you feel comparing them?
- "It was the good old days" how do you feel about this sentence?
- When you talked about this memory in a pair, did you talk about any negative details? Why, why not? Can you remember any negative details about this memory? Can you share them?
- What is your favourite part of this memory?
- What is your least favourite part of this memory?
- How do you cope with these waves of feelings?

The aim of these questions is to make the participants wonder if they believe their memories to be part of the "good old days", implying the past was better than the present. The participants will also realise they tend to block out negative feelings they may have had while living this experience. Here it should be stressed that it is completely normal if their happiness is wavering, sometimes we are fine and sometimes a little less fine. We should try to learn how to be more resilient. The activity instructor should walk around and encourage, motivate shy participants to speak up but not pressure them.

#### **EXERCISE #2**

The activity instructor first asks the participants what they have learnt and how they felt about the questions they asked each other during the activity.

During the group discussion, the activity instructor can mention the following: "When you first told your partner about your happy memory, it is most likely that you did not mention any negative details". The activity instructor then explains the rosy retrospection phenomenon, its function and its effect. The participants should remember that we tend to remember past events more positively than how we experienced them at the time. Which leads to a feeling than the past was better than it actually was.



Ask the participants to reflect on the following questions:

- Were the "good old days" actually better than the present or is it just rosy retrospection tricking me?
- To what extent do other people influence my good spirits?
- To what extent am I in control of my own well-being?

#### **CLOSING**

<u>#</u>17

Let's imagine we are five years into the future. Ask the participants to say a few words about their present and to highlight some nice memories that will become "nostalgic memories" in the future.





### 'HAVE YOU FALLEN ASLEEP?'

|               | OBJECTIVES:                | To raise awareness of sleeper effect. | TIME:<br>TOOLS | 70 minutes   |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| ्<br>8880<br> | TYPE:<br>AGE GROUP:        | Group activity.<br>15-25              | REQUIRED:      | Thick, bright-coloured yarn,<br>scissor, clips, paper/post its,<br>pens/markers  |
| රිපීරි        | NUMBER<br>OF PARTICIPANTS: | 8-10                                  | SOURCES:       | Foos, A. E., Keeling, K., & Keeling,<br>D. (2015). <i>Redressing the Sleeper</i><br><i>Effect : Evidence for the Favorable</i><br><i>Persuasive Impact of Discounting</i><br><i>Information Over Time in a</i><br><i>Contemporary Advertising</i><br><i>Context.</i> Journal of Advertising,<br>45(1), 1925. https://core.ac.uk/<br>download/pdf/83956517.pdf<br>Foodnavigator-usa.com.<br>(2015). <i>Florida judge approves</i><br>\$3.99m deal in Kashi GMO false<br>advertising lawsuit. https:// |

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#### DESCRIPTION

#### EXERCISE #1

The activity instructor prepares a few long strings beforehand. At the end of each string there is a piece of paper attached. The text on the paper scrap can be, for example, the following:

- "The efficacy of this cream has been proven by 95% of women who were paid for participating in the testing".
- "Diet Coke can help you lose weight".

Some of the participants grab a string (one each), attach one part of it to a certain place in the room and then move around, attaching different parts of the string to different parts of the room. In the end the participants meet in the middle, holding the ends of their strings (which have a text attached). The participants read the statements out loud. They each have to guess about the other participants' statements (strings). Where do they think the statements originally come from? What is the source of a string? The activity instructor should make sure the strings are long enough and as the participants created a sort of a net, it should be difficult to see where each string is coming from.

Then the participants are asked to exchange strings and follow the string they got back to its origin – while doing this, the participants are also cleaning up the room full of strings.

#### CLOSING

The activity instructor describes the features of the sleeper effect and asks the participants the following questions:

- What is the area you believe to be most dominated by the sleeper-effect? (Social media, television, advertisements)
- Can you recall a slogan or product that may have a similar impact on you?
- How can you be more aware of the sleeper effect?
   (be aware of this topic, make conscious decisions, search for sources, look for different points of view)
   What can we do to reduce the impact of the sleeper effect in our society?
- (raise awareness, learn to read between the lines, know more about product labels, do not believe everything that comes from the media)

### **Other toolkits and resources**

We compiled a list of other useful toolkits for this subject. They contain activities that can be played with young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and other effective methods to deal with these situations.

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### How to help prevent radicalisation of young people by raising their self-awareness of cognitive biases

Toolkit for Social Workers, Youth Workers and Mental Health Professionals

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Prevention of Youth Radicalisation Through Self-Awareness on Cognitive Biases

(PRECOBIAS)