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AN INFORMATION KIT

FOR MANAGERS

**Preventing radicalization leading to violence
in the workplace**

Produced by:



CENTRE FOR THE
PREVENTION
OF RADICALIZATION
LEADING TO VIOLENCE

In cooperation with:

CRHA

Ordre des conseillers
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Preventing radicalization leading to violence in the workplace



As is the case with other psychosocial issues (e.g. harassment, discrimination, intimidation), **radicalization leading to violence** has become a societal issue that requires a cross-sectional analysis.

No economic sector is completely devoid of radicalization leading to violence. And yet, while the potential consequences are very real and well known, both private and public organizations tend to be in the dark on the subject. There does seem, however, to be a growing awareness about the phenomenon and an increasing desire to prepare for and respond to it judiciously.

As a manager, there are several ways in which you can prevent and counter radicalization leading to violence. The purpose of this guide is to inform you of the important role you can play and give you some tools and some solid courses of action to properly address this complex issue.

1

How to distinguish
“radicalization leading to
violence” from an “expression
of personal beliefs”

2

Guidelines for
managing human resources
in delicate situations

3

How to approach a
vulnerable employee

SIX QUESTIONS ABOUT RADICALIZATION LEADING TO VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

How to identify behaviours
associated with radicalization
leading to violence

4

How to handle a situation
involving a collaborator
who appears to be in the
process of radicalization

5

Practices to adopt
that promote prevention
in the workplace

6

A photograph of two construction workers from behind, looking towards a building under construction. The worker on the left is wearing a red and blue plaid shirt and a bright yellow safety vest with reflective black stripes. The worker on the right is wearing a black shirt and a yellow safety vest. Both are wearing hard hats. The background shows a multi-story building with balconies under construction against a clear blue sky.

WHAT IS RADICALIZATION LEADING TO VIOLENCE?

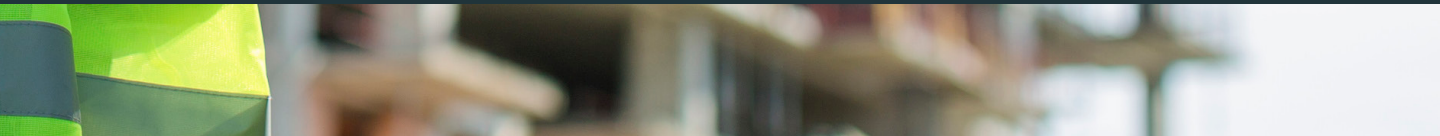


/1. DEFINITION

Situations of radicalization leading to violence are often poorly understood and confused with other psychosocial issues. CPRLV defines it as follows:



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



/2. FORMS OF RADICALIZATION

Radicalization and extremism can be expressed through various ideological movements, which may or may not threaten public safety or encourage violence, or conversely, promote legal and peaceful activities. All of the following definitions refer to violent extremism.

Violent right-wing extremism

A form of radicalization associated with fascism, racism/racism, supremacism and ultranationalism. This form of radicalization is characterized by the violent defence of a racial, ethnic or pseudo-national identity, and is also associated with radical hostility toward state authorities, minorities, immigrants and/or left-wing political groups.

Violent politico-religious extremism

A form of radicalization associated with a political interpretation of religion and the defence, sometimes by violent means, of a religious identity perceived to be under attack in international conflicts, foreign policy decisions, social debates, etc. This form of violent radicalization can stem from any religion.

Violent left-wing extremism

A form of radicalization that focuses primarily on anti-capitalist demands and calls for the transformation of political systems deemed responsible for producing social inequalities, and that ultimately employ violent means to further its cause. This category includes anarchist, Maoist, Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist groups that use violence to defend their cause.

Violent single-issue extremism

A form of radicalization essentially motivated by a single ideological issue. This category includes radical environmental or animal rights groups, anti-abortion groups, anti-LGBTQ or anti-feminist movements, and ultra-individualist or independent extremist movements (such as Freeman on the Land and sovereign citizens) that use violence to defend their causes. Mass murderers whose motivations are partially or wholly ideological may also fall under this category.

/3. DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN VIOLENT RADICALIZATION AND EXPRESSIONS OF PERSONAL BELIEFS

It is sometimes easy to confuse a person's beliefs that reflect a materialization of violent radicalization with a legitimate expression of personal beliefs. When it comes to political, religious or personal thoughts, it's not always easy to distinguish between a person's opinion, a legitimate belief and extremist thoughts indicating that radicalization is underway.

It is crucial that managers be able to distinguish between these notions and adapt their decisions and practices accordingly. This will help ensure a successful strategy for preventing radicalization leading to violence.



KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

Radicalization leading to violence ≠ a legitimate expression of personal beliefs

- **Violent radicalization** is when a person is unwavering and rigid in their belief (e.g. political, religious or cultural) or ideology, to the extent that they encourage, facilitate or use violence to impose or defend that belief. The person believes so strongly in an idea that they become intolerant toward others, even if it means engaging in hateful or violent behaviour toward them.
- **The legitimate expression of personal beliefs** is different in that it does not involve legitimizing or engaging hateful or violent behaviour. A person can be an ardent defender of a belief (e.g. political, religious, and cultural) or ideology, without necessarily becoming intolerant toward others or engaging in hateful or violent behaviour toward them.



**Radicalization
leading to
violence:
a matter of social
responsibility
for organizations**

Private and public-sector organizations more than just workplaces—they have a social responsibility to their employees, clients and society at large. Radicalization leading to violence is an issue that cannot be ignored. Prevention has become a high-stakes issue and cannot be placed solely in the hands of the government or civil society actors. Managers also have a key role to play. When managers become involved in the fight against violent radicalization, the impact extends beyond the walls of their company and into the larger community.

/1. RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLENT RADICALIZATION IN THE WORKPLACE

There are known risks associated with radicalization leading to violence showing up in the workplace. These risks are easier prevented than controlled.

Safety risks

Violent radicalization in a company poses two main types of security risks. On the one hand, staff or clients can become the targets of hate or violence carried out by their radicalized colleagues. On the other, companies working in a strategic sector (e.g. security, energy, transport) or that manage critical infrastructures run an even greater risk of becoming a target.

Risks to work relations

Radicalization leading to violence can have a very direct negative impact on a company's atmosphere and on relationships between employees. It is also likely to infringe upon the right of all employees to enjoy a harassment-free workplace.¹

Risks to the company's reputation

Cases of violent radicalization in the workplace can stain the company's reputation if publicly exposed. If the authorities or the media learn that the company has not taken an upstream, preventative approach, or that it has not adequately handled the situation, it can tarnish the company's image in the eyes of its clients, suppliers, shareholders and the public at large. This is why it is crucial to be proactive when it comes to radicalization leading to violence.

**How to
appropriately
address the
expression of
personal beliefs
in the workplace**

It is perfectly normal for people to express their personal beliefs in the workplace. This falls under a person's legitimate right to freedom of expression, which applies in a group or company setting and in society in general.

ATTENTION!

Do not falsely assume that a person's expression of personal beliefs (e.g. religious, political or ideological) in the workplace is a sign of radicalization, especially if there is no indication of intolerant, hostile or violent behaviour.

/1. WAYS THAT PERSONAL BELIEFS APPEAR IN THE WORKPLACE

The following are a few ways in which a person's personal beliefs may show up in the workplace:

- Requests for accommodation
- Personal practices that are:
 - religious (e.g. wearing a visible religious symbol)
 - political (e.g. a flag associated with a political allegiance)
 - ideological (e.g. completely vegetarian meals)

This is not without limitations.

NOTE

Freedom of expression must not lead to acts of discrimination, pressure, proselytism, intimidation, assault or violence.

/2. MANAGING THE EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL BELIEFS WITHIN COMPANIES

Managers must have the right tools to correctly interpret situations where the line between “radicalization leading to violence” and “expression of personal beliefs” is unclear,² and to act in a way that is well informed and appropriate.

Making the wrong decision can carry heavy consequences, both for the company and the people involved. Firing an employee wrongly thought to be “radicalized” when they have merely expressed their personal beliefs may be deemed discrimination under the law, in addition to the damage may cause to the person in question.

In such as situation, the **legal framework** must be the primary guide used in making a decision. There are a number of **practical guidelines** to ensure sound intervention management and reasonable accommodations, if needed.

/3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK: WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

There are a number of legislative provisions and legal principles to guide the decisions and actions taken by an employer and their staff relating to the expression of personal beliefs in the workplace.

- **Freedom of expression and religious freedom**

Freedom of expression and religion are fundamental rights that are protected under human rights laws. While these rights can be fully enjoyed by employees, they must be tempered by the employer's managerial power.

- **Right to equality**

The right to equality specifically prohibits the unfair treatment of one employee in comparison to another due to a person's convictions (real or assumed). Every decision a manager makes must be governed by the principle of non-discrimination against a person's political or religious convictions.

While there is no direct reference to radicalization (leading to violence) in labour laws, some legal principles do apply.

- **Non-violent radicalization**

Radicalization is not necessarily violent and should not automatically be treated as such. When an employee demonstrates potentially radical behaviour without promoting or using violence, there is no punishment under

the law. Managers are able to sanction an employee whose behaviour undermines the company's core mission, safety or work environment. Nevertheless, any decisions made must not infringe on the fundamental rights and freedoms of the person in question.

- **Proselytism**

Proselytism refers to any attempt to persuade a person or a group of people to adhere to a political, religious or other belief or doctrine. Managers must be vigilant when an employee engages in proselytizing behaviours in the workplace or when they use their position to do so (even outside of work hours). There are no clear or strict legal principles around this. Employers must strike a balance between vigilance and discernment.

- **Hateful threats, speech and behaviours**

If beliefs manifest as hateful threats, speech or behaviours, this in and of itself can be considered a crime, and is thereby punishable by law. Furthermore, any employee who (1) utters threats, (2) advocates genocide, (3) publicly incites hate, or (4) wilfully promotes hate is guilty of offences under the *Criminal Code*.

/4. GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING THE EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL BELIEFS

Employees can request accommodation for their personal beliefs or related practices to enable them to perform their work while respecting their convictions. For the employer, this raises the question of **reasonable accommodation**.

Similarly, an employee may behave in a way that goes against the company's established practices and standards. In such a case, it is also a good idea to check if the circumstances merit reasonable accommodation.³

- **Right to equality**

The right to equality is guaranteed under human rights law, in particular the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*. Employers are required to demonstrate openness to taking measures to adapt to their employees' sincerely held personal beliefs, including religious beliefs.

- **Working together toward a solution**

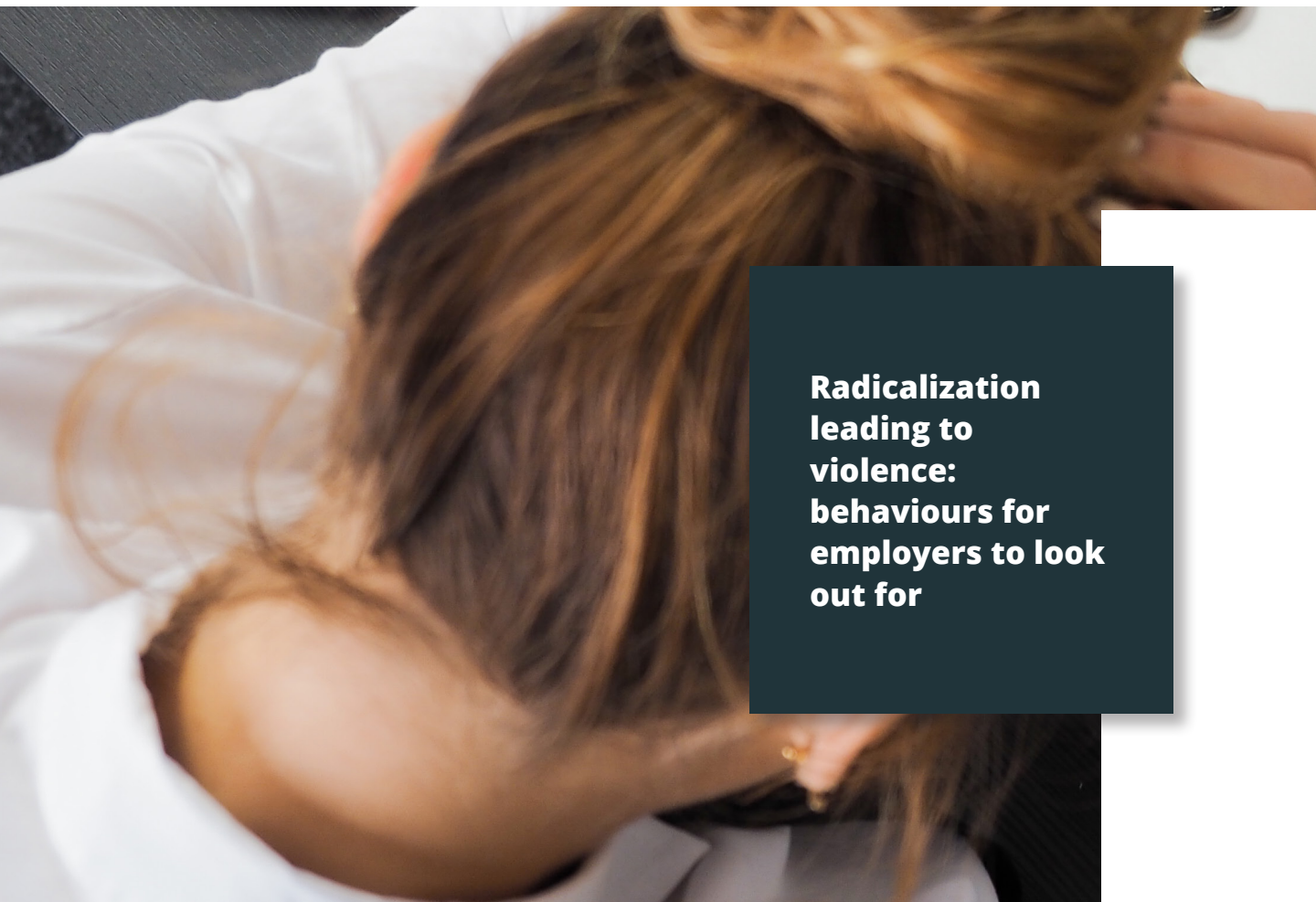
When a sincere personal belief is at stake, preventing the employee from complying with workplace policies or requirements, it is best to try to work together to find a solution. It may be necessary for the union or human resources to get involved.

NOTE

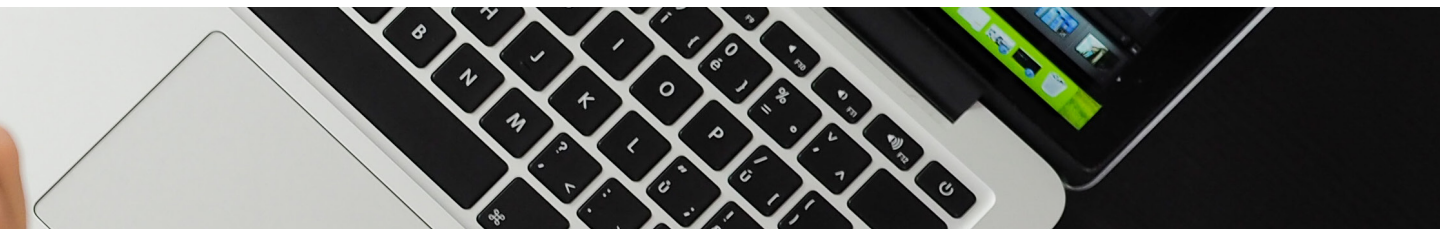
Although general guidelines exist, it is important to remember that each case is unique and must be evaluated based on the specifics of the job and the work environment.

- **Undue hardship**

The employer's duty to accommodate reaches a limit when it becomes an "undue hardship". Employers are not required to provide special accommodations when doing so would cause a major disruption, hinder the company's operations or lead to unreasonable costs. Reasonable accommodations must not create discriminatory or damaging conditions that violate the rights of other employees (e.g. refusal to work with a colleague due to their gender or ethnic origin).



**Radicalization
leading to
violence:
behaviours for
employers to look
out for**



There is no single profile or path of radicalization. Each situation is unique.

Nevertheless, certain behaviours are indicators that a potential process of radicalization leading to violence is underway, in particular any sudden changes or exaggerated claims in the name of personal beliefs.

To support managers in their evaluations, CPRLV has created a special tool, called the “Behaviour Barometer”,⁴ to raise awareness about isolating behaviours that are often associated with radicalization. Below are some examples of such behaviours, which must be taken in context for an accurate evaluation:

- Rejecting the rules and regulations of the professional environment based on ideological, political or religious grounds
- Refusing to interact with colleagues due to their gender (sexist stance or speech)
- Suddenly becoming disinterested in professional activities, or repeatedly absent without a valid excuse

- When interacting with colleagues, legitimizes the use of violence to defend a cause or ideology
- Irregular requests for extra work hours
- Selling personal belongings to fund a cause or ideology
- In the workplace, sharing violent extremist forums, online videos, websites, etc.

NOTE

The examples above and those in the Behaviour Barometer are not exhaustive. They should only be used as guidelines, and not to draw hasty conclusions.

Managers should also seek out qualified resource people or contact the professionals at the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence.



Handling a potential situation of radicalization in the workplace

Handling a potential situation of radicalization in the workplace requires a great deal of tact and heightened sensitivity on the part of the manager.



You must approach the situation with an open, kind, respectful, non-stigmatizing attitude toward the colleague in question. We recommend taking the following six steps in suspected cases of violent radicalization.

/1. EXAMINE THE FLAGGED SITUATION

In order to handle the situation appropriately, with consideration for its complexity and nuance, you must first try to objectively gather information to get a clearer picture of the situation.

- What beliefs have been expressed?
- Have you noticed sudden changes in behaviour?
- Are any of the observed behaviours listed on the “Behaviour Barometer”?
- Are there signs of legitimizing violence?

When collecting information about a potential situation of radicalization, it is important not to treat it like an investigation, and especially not an accusation. The more the employee feels that others are suspicious or concerned about them, the more likely they are to isolate themselves and hide any behaviour that may cause concern. Moreover, these types of attitudes can have an effect on the employee’s psychological well-being and work performance.

CAREFUL!

It is essential to provide the necessary internal and external support to the employee who flagged the situation or any other person involved.

/2. PREPARE TO MEET WITH THE EMPLOYEE

Whether or not the concerns turn out to be well founded, the meeting can have a serious effect on the employee in question. For this reason, it is crucial to do the following:

- Have all the information at hand
- Be extremely careful in analyzing the situation
- Make sure that the situation is not hiding a potential conflict between employees
- Avoid drawing other employees' attention to the situation in order to prevent any stigmatization
- Remain calm and do not dramatize the situation so as not to alarm or disrupt staff unnecessarily

- Hear the employee's concerns and try to understand to find the right solutions for the situation
- Avoid stigmatizing the employee and their words; openly disagreeing with them could serve to reinforce their behaviours and identity-based isolation

It may be necessary to meet with the employee several times.

NOTE

The manager may request guidance from a specialist in radicalization leading to violence.

/3. HOLD A MEETING AND EXPLORE THE SITUATION

The meeting must be seen as a chance to discuss, understand and clarify the situation. It is crucial to create a trusting relationship. The person must feel they can speak without worry of judgement or retaliation. It is important to listen to the employee and to:

- Clearly state the issue that is cause for the meeting, without concealing or hiding anything
- Listen carefully and impartially, letting go of any personal judgements⁵ so you can focus on the validity of their explanations, comments and reactions

/4. ASSESS THE SITUATION

After the first meeting, what comes next?

- Compare the information you have gathered to that in CPRLV's "Behaviour Barometer". Do the observed behaviours tend to be insignificant, troubling, worrisome or alarming? The manager or expert's judgement must overlap with the observations.
- Do not take on a case alone. Depending on the company's structure and its internal processes, managers should not hesitate to ask other people (e.g. superior, HR professional, internal specialist) to help assess the situation. With the benefit of multiple perspectives, you will be better equipped to accurately diagnose the situation, verify or obtain information and handle a delicate situation or crisis.

/5. DEFINE AN ACTION PLAN

Expressions of personal beliefs

If, after assessing the situation, you as a manager conclude that the observed behaviours stem from personal beliefs and not a process of radicalization leading to violence, you must:

- Ensure that interventions adhere to the legal framework for such a situation,⁶ in addition to the company's rules and practices
- Provide reasonable accommodation, if needed⁷
- Report on the assessment to the people affected by the employee's⁸ behaviour, if deemed necessary

Radicalization leading to violence

If, after assessing the situation, you conclude that the behaviours observed stem from a process of radicalization leading to violence, the intervention plan must be aimed at improving the behaviours that have an impact on performance and the atmosphere at work. The plan must meet the following objectives:

- Help the employee who has been or is becoming radicalized by calling on external, internal, psychosocial, community or professional support
- Involve the employee in seeking solutions so they can be held accountable for their results
- Explain the measures that will be taken if the expected results are not obtained
- Smooth over the employee's relationships with their colleagues
- Frame the ideological issues raised by the situation

If deemed necessary, the manager can report the results to those affected by the employee's behaviour.



/6. FOLLOW-UP

There are ways in which to follow up:

- Checking on the employee's progress to make sure that they are truly disengaging and have all the resources they need to do so, and that they are working toward the expected results
- Holding up your end of the deal. If the manager has made commitments to the employee, it is important to uphold them and to do so in a timely manner, and to keep the employee updated on the progress made. Failing to follow through on your commitments could fuel the employee's frustration and impede the disengagement process

NOTE

Taking an entirely punitive approach toward an employee who has been or is in the process of radicalization can end up aggravating their personal issues or radicalization.

This is why, if there is legitimate cause for punishment, it must be given in keeping with a proper support and guidance plan.



Intervening in potential situations of radicalization in the workplace: the takeaway

There are different ways in which the process of radicalization leading to violence may appear, not all of which involve behaviour or actions that justify immediate termination. On the contrary, a strong intervention plan will support the employee's disengagement from radicalization, in addition to fostering good will, openness to diversity and group solidarity, which in turn supports social harmony.



Basic principles to facilitate the case management of a radicalized person

Remain calm and do not overreact to the situation.

Choose the right time and place to have the discussion.

Show respect and empathy and listen to the employee in order to establish trust with them.

Do not confront them directly or challenge their values or beliefs.

Make sure that the intervention does not contribute to a climate of paranoia or suspicion in the workplace. This could cause the employee to be stigmatized or ostracized.

Respect the other person's boundaries so as not to do or say something that could aggravate the situation.

Make use of the available resources, internal or external, for a deeper understanding of the situation and, in doing so, make sure to adhere to confidentiality standards.

**Preventing
radicalization
leading to
violence in
the workplace**

A person in the process of violent radicalization tends to question the promise of social togetherness. To prevent feelings of frustration, injustice or discrimination, managers must be proactive and work to improve the general work environment.

This is why we recommend considering radicalization leading to violence as an organizational risk. It is important to think about preventative measures that can be incorporated into the organization's existing processes.

The table below provides a few such examples.⁹



Actions to prevent radicalization leading to violence in the workplace

- Encourage an inclusive dialogue that is respectful of everyone's beliefs.
- Promote an organizational culture rooted in openness and tolerance.
- Adopt a diversity management and promotion policy.
- Set internal guidelines for managing situations in which employees express their personal beliefs. Share the adopted measures with the rest of the company.
- Train the employees who would most likely have to handle situations of radicalization (e.g. human resources, management, and security).

**Why should
I get in touch
with the
Centre for the
Prevention of
Radicalization
Leading to
Violence**

info-radical.org

Radicalization leading to violence is a complex phenomenon. CPRLV heads a number of research projects on this topic and is involved in designing prevention, intervention and training programs for various target groups.

The professionals at CPRLV are part of an interdisciplinary team whose job is to provide you with:

- **support**
- **advice**
- **guidance**

based on your reality and your needs.

If needed, we can also direct you toward other community services and resources for help.

ATTENTION!

IF YOU FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF
AN EMPLOYEE OR ANOTHER PERSON,
CALL 911.



Notes

- 1 Several sections of the law address this matter. Article 2087 CCQ requires the employer to “take any measures [...] to protect the health, safety and dignity of the employee.” (Civil Code of Quebec, June 1, 2018). Section 51 of the AOHs states that the employer “must take the necessary measures to protect the health and ensure the safety and physical well-being of his worker.” (Act respecting occupational health and safety, June 1 2018. Section 81.19 The ALS stipulates that employers “must take reasonable action to prevent psychological harassment and, whenever they become aware of such behaviour, to put a stop to it.” (Act respecting labour standards, June 1, 2018). Discriminatory harassment is also addressed in section 10.1 of the Charter of human rights and freedoms: CQLR, chapter C-12.
- 2 See section 1.3 of this guide: Distinguish between violent radicalization and an expression of personal beliefs.
- 3 Quebec’s Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse has created a training guide on the duty of companies to provide accommodation, available in French at the following address: [cdpdj.qc.ca/fr/formation/accommodement/Pages/index.html].
- 4 For more information, see the guide “Behaviour Barometer: How to recognize radicalization behaviours leading to violence”, available on the website of the Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence: [https://info-radical.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/BAROMETRE_EN_CPRLV_2016-1.pdf]
- 5 Preconceived ideas, false perceptions, stereotypes, etc.
- 6 See section 3.3 of this guide: Managing the expression of personal beliefs within companies
- 7 See section 3.4 of this guide: Guidelines for managing the expression of personal beliefs
- 8 For example, if the situation was flagged by a colleague, it is better to meet with them to share the observations and commitments that were made.
- 9 This list is not exhaustive. Improve it by adapting it to reflect the company’s reality and its internal and external resources who are knowledgeable about violent radicalization.

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