

RADICALIZED OFFENDERS AND SECURITY THREAT GROUPS IN CORRECTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

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Recently, there has been an increasing focus in many countries regarding the challenge of violent extremists as well as members of Security Threat Groups (e.g., gangs, organized crime) in correctional settings. This includes both concerns about the safe management and community reintegration of these individuals as well as their potential to radicalize and/or recruit others. With respect to violent extremists, while several countries have long histories of managing individuals and groups who have committed criminal acts to promote religious or political aims, an increasing number of high profile attacks over the previous two decades have put an increased focus on establishing a greater understanding of these individuals and how to best manage them in a carceral setting. In a series of three lectures, key issues related to correctional management of violent extremists and members of Security Threat Groups (STGs) will be explored, drawing on both international research as well as work completed by the Correctional Service of Canada.

In the first lecture “*Radicalized Offenders and Security Threat Groups: What Do We Know?*”, several themes will be discussed, including definitional issues (i.e., what do we mean by a “radicalized offender”; what is a Security Threat Group), myths and realities regarding STGs and radicalized offenders, an overview of research on STGs and violent extremists, and work that has been done to assist in identifying STG members and radicalized individuals in correctional settings. In addition, international best practices regarding the management of radicalized offenders will be discussed.

The focus of the second lecture, “*Management of Radicalized Offenders and Security Threat Groups in a Correctional Context*” builds on the first lecture by exploring “*What Do We Do*” in relation to these offenders’ groups, concentrating on evidence-based strategies and approaches. Topics covered include: population management strategies for STGs and radicalized offenders, assessment and intervention approaches, and the importance of collaboration with external partners. Specific issues to be discussed include accommodation models, staff training, information sharing, and the importance of all assessment and intervention approaches being grounded in principles of effective corrections such as the Risk, Needs, Responsivity (RNR) Model (Andrews, Bonta and Hoge, 1990). Research on disengagement from radical behaviour and violent extremism will also be explored.

The final lecture focuses on “*General and Cultural Considerations in the Management of Offenders*” including those who are members of STGs or radicalized. Drawing on research related to specific responsivity (Andrews, Bonta and Hoge, 1990), the impact of both gender and ethnocultural identity as it relates to issues of assessment and effective interventions will be reviewed, as well as the implications that the research findings in the area have on the correctional management of specific subgroups of offenders.

References:

Andrews, D. A., Bonta, J., & Hoge, R. D. (1990). Classification for effective rehabilitation: Rediscovering psychology. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 17, 19-52.