



**Colorado Resilience Collaborative  
International Disaster Psychology Program  
Graduate School of Professional Psychology  
University of Denver**

**Recommendations for Preventing Targeted Violence in Colorado**

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## **I. History of the Colorado Resilience Collaborative**

The Colorado Resilience Collaborative (CRC) is an interdisciplinary initiative created to support survivors of identity based violence, and prevent and disrupt violent extremism in Colorado. The CRC initiative is part of the International Disaster Psychology program at the University of Denver Graduate School of Professional Psychology. Community members can receive trauma informed, culturally competent, and inclusive services through the International Disaster Psychology program's Trauma and Disaster Recovery Clinic. Clinical services such as individual therapy are offered and the TDRC maintains numerous community partnerships, provides psychoeducational training and consultation in the U.S. and abroad and conducts and disseminates applied research.

This project grew out of an identified need for a community-based approach to end targeted violence. The initial project was supported by the Colorado U.S. Attorney's Office and the Department of Homeland Security, and it is now funded by the University of Denver, Graduate School of Professional Psychology and Colorado-based grants. Frequently targeted individuals are often from marginalized groups, and people may be discriminated against due to race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, disability, and other categorizations. The CRC promotes prevention of identity-based violence as well as insight, healing, and action at individual, family, organizational, and community levels. This naturally aligns with the overall values held by the University of Denver including excellence, innovation, engagement, inclusiveness, and integrity. The University supports initiatives that support the creation of local and global partnerships to contribute to a sustainable common good.

## **II. The Nature of the Issue in Colorado**

Colorado has a complicated history of mass casualties, including the infamous massacres at Columbine High School and the Aurora Theatre, and most recently the STEM school shooting in May of 2019. While this is by no means a complete list, Colorado's unique history garnered the attention of the Department of Homeland Security as a pilot site for innovative, community-based programming to prevent domestic terrorism and violent extremism.

In regards to hate crimes, the Colorado statute, §C.R.S. 18-9-121, defines a hate crime as "an attack against an individual based on race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and gender identity."<sup>1</sup> According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation there was a 16% increase in hate crimes in Colorado between 2017 and 2018.<sup>2</sup> The Colorado Department of Public Safety reports a six year high in hate crimes, having nearly doubled from 2017-2018. There were 185 hate and bias-motivated crimes

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<sup>1</sup> CO Rev Stat § 18-9-121 (2016).

<sup>2</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). (2019). *2018 Hate Crime Statistics Released*. Retrieved from: <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2018-hate-crime-statistics-released-111219>

in Colorado in 2018; 112 were related to race and ethnicity, 32 due to sexual orientation and gender identity, and 26 were religion-based.<sup>3</sup>

Almost all of these incidents were perpetrated by people who identify as White Supremacists. Marginalized groups such as immigrants and refugees, minorities, women, those identifying as LGBTQIA+, and certain religious groups (predominantly Jewish and Muslim communities) are primarily targeted. These same groups tend to have more barriers to reporting due to fear of retaliation, distrust of law enforcement, belief that such behavior is commonplace in the United States, lack of understanding of the laws and protections available to victims, and a need to move on from the event in hopes of returning to “normal” after a traumatic incident.

It is not always possible to know and understand the motivations and ideologies of an attacker. For example, the Las Vegas massacre perpetrated by Stephen Paddock is not considered an act of terrorism due in large part to the lack of a known motive.<sup>4</sup> Many are killed by law enforcement or commit suicide in the midst of the attack, leaving more questions than answers for the community. However, the impact of such terrorizing acts remains the same. Therefore, the conversation in Colorado has been moving towards the use of a new term, “targeted violence,” that would encapsulate domestic terrorism, hate crimes, school shootings, and other attacks that are committed in order to make an ideological or social statement by harming others. The Federal Bureau of Investigation noted in their report on Lone Offenders that “like other perpetrators of targeted violence, the offenders in this study accepted the use of violence as a means to achieve a goal.”<sup>5</sup>

### **III. 2019 Colorado Summit on Preventing Targeted Violence**

In 2018, Colorado was awarded funding and technical assistance from the National Governors Association to address targeted violence in the state. The governor-appointed team met regularly to discuss a statewide initiative, and it was determined that Colorado was in the awareness-building phase. Therefore, the team organized the Colorado Preventing Targeted Violence Summit held on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The invitees were leaders among 18 State Departments and multiple stakeholders agencies across Colorado. The agenda provided a comprehensive understanding of the nature of targeted violence as it applies to Colorado.

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<sup>3</sup> Colorado Department of Public Safety. (2019). *Hate Crime 2019*. Retrieved from: <https://coloradocrimestats.state.co.us/tops/report/hate-crime/colorado/2018>

<sup>4</sup> Lombardo, J. (2017). *LVMPD Criminal Investigative Report of the 1 October Mass Casualty Shooting*, pg 126. Retrieved from: [https://www.lvmpd.com/en-us/Documents/1-October-FIT-Criminal-Investigative-Report-FINAL\\_080318.pdf](https://www.lvmpd.com/en-us/Documents/1-October-FIT-Criminal-Investigative-Report-FINAL_080318.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). (2019). *Lone Offender Terrorism*, p. 29. Retrieved from: <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/fbi-releases-lone-offender-terrorism-report-111319>

Over the course of the day-long Summit, participants listened to presentations from DHS (Department of Homeland Security), CDHS (Colorado Department of Human Services), CDPHE (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment) and Colorado Resilience Collaborative to provide an overview of targeted violence and review existing efforts within the state to combat targeted violence. Additional speakers included a researcher who spoke about risk factors associated with targeted violence, a former white supremacist, a survivor of white supremacist violence, and a Commander from a local police department who has responded to mass casualty targeted violence.

Through a partnership between the Colorado Resilience Collaborative and Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was used to explore the roles of particular agencies, the resources and capacities in Colorado, the gaps and deficits in the existing resources, and processes that may challenge efforts to combat targeted violence. The overall goal was to provide the Governor Office with strategies to help build healthier communities in Colorado by reducing targeted violence through the integration of existing training, partnerships, and intervention programs.

#### **IV. Overview of the Nominal Group Technique**

The Nominal Group Technique is a method of structured small-group brainstorming that is used to facilitate contributions from all members of the group.<sup>6</sup> Small groups generate feedback on a given scenario and once groups have submitted written feedback, group members independently rank ideas based on what is most likely to assist in solving the presented problem. Individual rankings and thought processes for the associated rankings are then discussed and a final ranking is determined by the group.

The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) is beneficial because it allows all voices of the group to be heard and facilitates participation from all members of the group. It tends to generate more ideas when compared to traditional group brainstorming sessions. It limits the discussion to a single topic or purpose, through a structured process.<sup>7</sup>

Brainstorming groups consisted of Summit participants, and were conducted by a notetaker and trained facilitator. Using the NGT, groups began to identify challenges and functions in responding to targeted violence in Colorado that need to be addressed while considering available resources. "Challenges" are defined as any problems that might arise in the presented scenario. "Functions" are the steps the system must be able to take to address these challenges. "Resources" relate to the capacities a system must have to properly perform the aforementioned functions. The "system" is defined as any entity

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<sup>6</sup> American Society for Quality. (n.d.). *What is Nominal Group Technique?* Retrieved from: <https://asq.org/quality-resources/nominal-group-technique>

<sup>7</sup> Dunham, R.B. (2006). *Nominal Group Technique: A Users' Guide*. Retrieved from: [https://sswm.info/sites/default/files/reference\\_attachments/DUNHAM%201998%20Nominal%20Group%20Technique%20-%20A%20Users'%20Guide.pdf](https://sswm.info/sites/default/files/reference_attachments/DUNHAM%201998%20Nominal%20Group%20Technique%20-%20A%20Users'%20Guide.pdf)

that supplies services and coordination related to these challenges.<sup>8</sup> Once the NGT process was completed and the identified challenges were placed in rank order, groups then followed the same method to identify the necessary functions that were needed to combat these challenges.

## V. **Summary of the McBride et. al. Report**<sup>9</sup>

In total, Summit participant groups identified about 90 challenges and 80 functions that were needed by the system in order to effectively respond to the scenario. The following themes emerged:

### **Challenges**

- The futility of interagency communication without the presence of a true crime
- General lack of information about the case
- Struggles surrounding the ability to accurately interpret and evaluate a person's thought process
- Family dynamics that might complicate matters
- Lack of clear communication

### **Resources**

- Proper education for community members and practitioners such as school faculty and healthcare providers
- Adequate resources for individuals who might be at risk, including resources for parents, children, and individuals conducting possible intervention
- The establishment of a multidisciplinary team to facilitate the triage and response of cases.

### **Functions**

- Given the challenges and resources identified, Harvard synthesised four functions for consideration:
  - Coordination
  - Communication
  - Community
  - Service

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<sup>8</sup> McBride, M.K., Loeb-Piltch, R., Harriman, N. & Savoia, E. (2019). Final Report: A Brief Summary of Findings Based on Nominal Group Technique Data Collection at the Colorado Preventing Targeted Violence Summit. Boston, MA, USA.

<sup>9</sup> McBride, M.K. et. al. (2019). See footnote 8

## VI. **Definitions and Implications of the Four Major Functions**<sup>10</sup>

### **Coordination - Data Sharing and Protocols**

Definition: inter-agency coordination including information sharing and establishing protocols to effectively coordinate in times of crisis; specific resources to aid coordination could include an online information sharing platform accessible by multiple agencies, pre-existing data sharing agreements, and an established culture of data sharing

Implications:

- The agencies participating in targeted violence prevention efforts should work together to develop and implement new cross-jurisdictional and inter-agency policies, procedures, and/or coordinating mechanisms to facilitate the coordination of efforts in the prevention of targeted violence.
- For effective coordination, agencies should meet regularly to facilitate the discussion surrounding targeted violence prevention.

### **Communication - Internal Sharing and Public Relations**

Definition: the oral and electronic sharing of information among personnel to facilitate clear communication; establishing channels and mechanisms for public information sharing so as to effectively enable community engagement and service delivery.

Implications:

- The agencies participating in the program should conduct regular roundtable meetings to facilitate inter-agency discussion on the prevention of targeted violence, especially for non-crisis coordination (i.e., when a crime has not been committed).
- The agencies participating in the program should identify a roster of community partners to disseminate information to, and to collaborate with, in the work of informing and engaging the public regarding targeted violence prevention efforts

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<sup>10</sup> McBride, M.K. et. al. (2019). See footnote 8.

## **Community - Triage and Engagement**

Definition: an established and functional triage or referral process for community members that includes multi-disciplinary point teams that are pre-engaged and identified; community engagement as an ongoing process to establish presence and ties prior to an event occurring

### Implications:

- Specific initiatives should be implemented to increase community awareness about the appropriate contacts and resources to consider to prevent targeted violence.
- A cadre of community engagement activities and contacts beyond school resource officers should be created and disseminated to appropriate agencies and organizations.
- The agencies participating in the program should explore the creation of permanent multi-disciplinary point teams to develop procedures for triage and referrals mechanisms.

## **Service - Management and Delivery**

Definition: the delivery of wrap-around or community based services by law enforcement, educational officers, child protective services, or other stakeholders who engage with individuals who have been reported as high risk based on the local risk assessment procedure; educational resources for multi-disciplinary personnel necessary to develop effective service delivery and management.

### Implications:

- Develop educational materials to be shared across service sectors based on knowledge needs.
- Create training mechanisms to be shared across service sectors based on knowledge needs.
- Assess existing services and identify resources and relationships necessary to provide wrap-around services.

## **VII. Discussion**

### **Coordination**

Currently, there are gaps in consistent tracking of hate and bias-motivated crimes in Colorado across police departments. According to the Anti-Defamation League, Fort Collins, Lakewood, Thornton and Westminster did not report any hate crimes to the FBI



in 2017 (Mountain States Against Hate, 2019).<sup>11</sup> The Colorado Coalition Against Hate has drafted a letter to U.S. Senator Cory Gardner to urge him to support the National Opposition to Hate, Assault, and Threats to Equity (NO HATE) Act of 2019 (S.2043/H.R. 3545). This Act would address training, prevention, data collection, and best practices for hate crimes across the state of Colorado through grants.

Recipients would report about the effectiveness of their hate crime investigation and prevention initiatives, and the Attorney General would provide an annual review to Congress. Amendments to the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 would provide community service-based alternative sentencing options. Proper and more efficient data collection will contribute to effective allocation of law enforcement personnel and resources to aid in crime prevention, greater reassurance of victims, and nurturing of better law enforcement-community relationships.

### **Communication**

In cases of violent extremism, friends and family members are valuable bystanders who have reliable information about a person's intent to harm others, but there are relational barriers to reporting or involving others. Friends tend to know details about targets, weapons, and threats that have been made. Family members are more likely to notice concerning changes in their loved one, such as alterations in appearance, mood, behavior, interests, social contacts, or daily activities. However, they may not have the context or details to recognize these changes as hallmarks of radicalization or mobilization to harm others. Friends and family members may not want to overreact, they may confront the person but not share the information with anyone else, they may ignore concerning behavior by viewing it as a "joke," or they may not know what resources and support are available to them in these difficult situations.

Information-sharing is a common problem for states and countries developing prevention plans to combat targeted violence. Professionals commonly cite confidentiality laws as barriers to reporting concerning behavior. One does not have to report to law enforcement *per se*; in fact, many situations do not warrant law enforcement involvement, especially when no criminal behavior has occurred. While mental health professionals are tasked with maintaining patient confidentiality, exceptions must be made when a person makes threatening statements about potential violence. The 1976 case of *Tarasoff v. The Regents of the University of California* is a seminal case that requires professionals to notify people who may be harmed by a client. After the Aurora Theatre shooting, Colorado added location as a protected entity.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Mountain States Against Hate. "Draft Letter to Senator Cory Gardner." Received by Cory Gardner, October, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> CO Rev Stat § 13-21-117 (2014).

Providers may avoid treating potentially violent clients due to fear of liability if they do not properly warn. State laws vary in terms of mandated reporting, and Colorado requires over 40 different professions to report including medical physicians, child health associates, registered nurse, private or public school employees, clergy members, and even firefighters.<sup>13</sup> Providers may overestimate their competence around mandatory reporting, because while it may be more clear when someone is suicidal, homicidal, psychotic, or gravely disabled, the reporting of a potential violent extremist is more nuanced. For example, someone displaying pre-attack behaviors who refuses therapeutic interventions could be considered higher risk. While attendance is confidential data, it could be vital for stakeholders to know because it is an example of a countermeasure that has failed in this case. This suggests another countermeasure should be attempted. Training, case examples, and roundtable exercises are necessary to help professionals respond appropriately in cases of potential violence. Safe-2-Tell Colorado provides individuals with a safe and anonymous way to report concerning behavior within schools. Calls are free and their tip line is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Safe-2-Tell Colorado also conducts regular presentations and trainings aimed at the education of students, school faculty, law enforcement, and community members.

Interdisciplinary collaborations, multidisciplinary teams, or “situation tables” can be utilized to discuss concerning cases and receive consultation about potential interventions for individuals whom they are concerned may be on the pathway to targeted violence. The Situation Table model, originally adapted by Canada, is a risk-driven framework rather than incident-driven. This means that the purpose is to coordinate multiple agencies to facilitate the identification of the compounding risks of an individual or group in order to avert a crisis. From the mobilization of multiple agencies through the Situation Table it is believed that this process can aid in the reduction of possible harm.<sup>14</sup> This model is not to be used for general planning, but rather for specific “acutely elevated risk-driven interventions.”<sup>15</sup> The protection of privacy is a vital consideration within this model and participants should only disclose the minimum amount of information sharing needed to appropriately establish proper roles within the intervention.

In order for the Situation Table model to function, it is necessary to involve people who are educated about the potential benefits and risks of the process, committed to the

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<sup>13</sup> CO4Kids. (2019). Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect in Colorado. Retrieved from <http://www.co4kids.org/mandatoryreporting>

<sup>14</sup> Nilson, C. (2014). Risk-driven collaborative intervention: A preliminary impact assessment of Community Mobilization Prince Albert’s hub model. P 23. Saskatoon. University of Saskatchewan.

<sup>15</sup> Russell, H.C. & Taylor, N.E. (2014). Mitigating Acutely Elevated Risk of Harm Considerations in Adopting “The Situation Table.” *New Directions in Community Safety: Consolidating Lessons Learned about Risk and Collaboration*. Retrieved from: [http://www.oacp.on.ca/Userfiles/StandingCommittees/CommunityPolicing/ResourceDocs/OWG%20Mitigating%20Acutely%20Elevated%20Risk%20of%20Harm\\_4.pdf](http://www.oacp.on.ca/Userfiles/StandingCommittees/CommunityPolicing/ResourceDocs/OWG%20Mitigating%20Acutely%20Elevated%20Risk%20of%20Harm_4.pdf)

proper facilitation of this framework, have adequate leadership abilities, and understand the necessity for continued collaboration. It is also critical to gauge the communities' acceptance, or possible lack thereof, of this type of collaborative intervention assistance. The affected community must be assured that this method is not targeted at any specific individual or group, that privacy will be respected, and appropriate laws will be sustained. The community must find ways to engage the public, disseminate information about prevention efforts to appropriate community liaisons, create and provide materials and training programs for service providers, and identify existing resources and services across Colorado in order to spread the necessary knowledge regarding targeted violence prevention. The Situation Table is structured as a venue for human service professionals from a variety of disciplines to meet and collaborate on interventionist solutions to situations of acutely elevated risk.

### **Community**

To work towards community engagement, the CRC has already formed partnerships and assists in forming teams that function to address cases of extremism, both preventatively and retroactively during 2017-2018. Other community resources in place include the availability of school resource officers for teenagers, the Safe-2-Tell tip line, and protocols for threat and suicide assessments in schools. To improve upon engagement activities and contacts, schools could build upon existing diversity and inclusivity programs. Increasing awareness of extremism issues will involve not just schools, but all members of the community, including parents, religious entities, recreational facilities, and more. Creating a multidisciplinary point team, potentially in schools, workplaces, religious institutions, and more, would be important in engaging the community in the prevention of violent extremism.

Currently the CRC is a model for multidisciplinary teams and has experience with functioning in this capacity. The CRC also has access to research and policies, including international policies, addressing extremism prevention and detection, and would be a good source for all future multidisciplinary teams. The CRC offers trainings in schools and other institutions for the prevention and detection of extremism. Sharing this information within the community and creating spaces to discuss these topics is vital to the success of interventions and establishing a more connected community.

### **Service**

Service speaks to the need for wrap-around, community-based services for professionals and stakeholders who engage with high risk people. This is possible using existing systems with the addition of targeted training about violent extremism. Trained professionals have access to consultation services through the Colorado Resilience

Collaborative to then handle difficult cases when they arise using the suggested existing resources, systems, and protocols.

The first step is to provide each sector of the community with the training and education they need. Organizations should consider the role they play, factors to be aware of when addressing potential violence, and receive specialized educational materials developed for their profession. The CRC and its partners offer free trainings to targeted audiences including law enforcement, school systems, businesses, religious institutions, and mental health organizations.

The CRC can support the continuity of this information by creating online modules delivered through the International Disaster Psychology Program (GSPP) at the University of Denver that may include Continuing Education Units (CEU) for community officials. This raises the importance of knowing what information certain support services need.

It would be beneficial to continue building and disseminating a statewide 101 training or curriculum to support the existing Community Awareness Brief (CAB) and Law Enforcement Awareness Brief (LAB) currently offered by the Department of Homeland Security. The more uniform the information, the more consistent the intervention would be in each sector.

It would be beneficial to work with stakeholders to identify gaps in resources, challenges in their procedures, and competency needs that might arise when managing cases of targeted violence. This is a principle noted in the Austrian national standards as they emphasized an importance to pool information amongst different stakeholders (i.e. agencies, non-profits, political reps) on the status of “the social microclimate in communities” and to identify any legal barriers to information sharing. A social microclimate refers to the visible change in social developments a community may experience. In this case, Austria was referring to signs of extremist ideologies appearing in a community.<sup>16</sup>

One area of research to improve service functions would be how to identify and decrease false positives in threat management. There are comprehensive threat assessment and management systems in Colorado schools. However, reporting mechanisms can be used inappropriately. For example, a student might make a false report about peers through Safe-2-Tell to harass them. Other states have had incidents of “swatting” in which false reports are made to trigger a SWAT team to respond, which resulted in the death of a Kansas man in 2017.<sup>17</sup> Informing the public about the dangers

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<sup>16</sup> Bundesweites Netzwerk Extremismus-prävention und Deradikalisierung (BNED). (2018). The Austrian Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation. Retrieved from: <https://www.beratungsstelleextremismus.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2241.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Stevens, M. & Chow, A. (2018). Man Pleads Guilty to ‘Swatting’ Hoax that Resulted in a Fatal Shooting. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/13/us/barriss-swatting-wichita.html>

and implications of false reporting can be an important part of effective threat management and obtaining more accurate info from the community.

Effective collaboration requires creating a common language for discussion. Austrian standards also include this aspect when referring to education as a means of prevention stating “if people do not speak the same language – and this does not only include language in the traditional sense but also the mutual understanding of the messages conveyed – this leads to isolation on one hand, and the inability to act on the other.”<sup>18</sup> Agreeing on the use of terminology would aid Colorado in sharing knowledge and effectively delivering services that can prevent or intervene in these bias-related crimes.

## VIII. **Special Considerations**

The CRC would like to highlight several important subtopics as the State of Colorado moves forward with prevention and intervention efforts to combat violent extremism. These include sports, gender and the role of females, youth, and the online space. The purpose of discussing these issues is to have them addressed throughout prevention programming. Below the work conducted by others sheds light on the importance of these subtopics in prevention efforts.

### **Sports and Mixed Martial Arts**

Sport provides opportunities to channel tensions, engage with fellow community members, and enhance a sense of personal and group identity which are important in prevention. This concept is echoed in the Austrian national standards for threat prevention by directly supporting after-school youth activities that “enable young individuals to live autonomously and self-confidently while offering structures, activities, actions, and ideals that support maturing and are meaningful.”<sup>19</sup>

However, sport has also been used in service of violent extremism. Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) in particular has been used recently to recruit new members of hate groups and spread violent ideologies. While many seek to defend themselves and be part of a community promoting honor and discipline, MMA’s violent nature appeals to those wanting to harm other people. The White Supremacist clothing line, White Rex and the “Rise Above Movement” (RAM) overly use MMA to spread their message in the United States.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> BNED. (2018). See footnote 16

<sup>19</sup> BNED. (2018). See footnote 16

<sup>20</sup> Zidan, K. 2018. Fascist fight clubs: how white nationalists use MMA as a recruiting tool. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2018/sep/11/far-right-fight-clubs-mma-white-nationalists>

To address violent extremism in sports, France has placed contact officers at different levels for all sports federations to counter violent extremism.<sup>21</sup> Professionals and adult community members working directly with teens should be supported in training and curricula that promote autonomy, critical thinking, and inclusivity, as well as specific training about violent extremism.

### **Gender and the Role of Females**

Most research focuses on males as perpetrators of extremism, and national standards rarely address female roles in targeted violence. This disregards women's role in perpetrating, preventing, and being victimized by extremism.

Contrary to popular belief, females have perpetrated and promoted violence in extremist groups, domestically and internationally. For instance, the all-female wing of the Ku Klux Klan participated in lynching campaigns and led to the normalization of violence for some communities.<sup>22</sup> Suicide bombings committed by females killed 279 people world-wide in 2017.<sup>23</sup> While females have proven to be quite capable of committing extremist violence, most male-dominant extremist groups view females as being useful in terms of motherhood and teachers of the ideology.<sup>24</sup> However, when recruiting women, extremist groups tend to emphasize a sense of belonging and empowerment through political participation. Yet, when extremist ideologies tend to be misogynistic, the groups often undermine women's rights.<sup>25</sup>

Some extremist groups view women as second-class citizens, while other ideologies specifically target others based on gender. For example, the involuntary celibate (incel) movement blames women for the sexual frustrations of men, and generally condones misogyny.<sup>26</sup> Other non-binary gender identities can be targeted, which highlights the need for partnerships with LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups. For example, the CRC partners with organizations such as The Center, a LGBTQIA+ community center, in order to address the needs LGBTQIA+ community members who have been targeted due to their gender identity and/or gender expression.

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<sup>21</sup> République Française le Gouvernement. (2018). "Prevent to Protect." National Plan to Prevent Radicalization. Retrieved from:

[https://www.cipdr.gouv.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/PNPR\\_English\\_final\\_sansmediakit.pdf](https://www.cipdr.gouv.fr/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/PNPR_English_final_sansmediakit.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Bigio, J. & Vogelstein, R. (2019). Women and Terrorism: Hidden Threats, Forgotten Partners. *Council of Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/report/women-and-terrorism>

<sup>23</sup> Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. (2018). Violent Islamist Extremism in 2017. *Global Extremism Monitor*. Retrieved from: <https://institute.global/sites/default/files/inline-files/Global%20Extremism%20Monitor%202017.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Center on Extremism. (2018). When Women are the Enemy: The Intersection of Misogyny and White Supremacy. *Anti-Defamation League*. Retrieved from: <https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/when-women-are-the-enemy-the-intersection-of-misogyny-and-white-supremacy>

<sup>25</sup> Bigio, J & Vogelstein R. (2019). See footnote 22

<sup>26</sup> Center on Extremism. (2018). See footnote 24

Women may have a distinct advantage in their abilities to detect radicalization behaviors in friends and family members.<sup>27</sup> The roles women traditionally play in society place them in close contact with children and other vulnerable populations, giving them an advantage for detecting radicalization and implementing prevention procedures.<sup>28</sup> France has recognized this and their National Plan to Prevent Radicalization includes using teams involved in women's rights to help monitor radicalization.<sup>29</sup> In summary, the role of women should be considered throughout prevention programming.

## **Youth**

When considering vulnerable or high risk individuals in exposure to extremist ideologies, youth must be of high priority. In order to prevent radicalization in youth, France's National Plan to Prevent Radicalization focuses on making sure that students are getting proper education, are being encouraged to respect secularism, and that those in contact with children, including in sport capacities, have resources that teach them about the detection and prevention of radicalization. France's plan also includes monitoring online content to which youth may be exposed.<sup>30</sup>

It is worth recognizing the value in developing emotional and social competencies in our youth, improving their ability to think critically and solve problems and conflicts, which in turn bolsters resilience to recruitment propaganda. This speaks to the importance the Austrian national standard noted for supporting those who work directly with youth education in and outside of school. Further, becoming aware of how alluring modes of radicalization communicate with our youth is important in both preventing and intervening when it is noticed.<sup>31</sup>

The Austrian standard cites differences in how male and female youth are recruited. Gender-related factors should be taken into account when developing education and intervention training for youth workers. Individuals working directly with adolescents in schools and youth programs should know what language and approaches might be used to recruit males versus females. Further research is needed in ways to best identify signs of radicalization and ways to intervene that are gender-specific.

## **Online Communication**

While the Internet and social media provide opportunities for connection and the sharing of ideas, it has more recently been used to promote hate speech, recruit new members to hate groups, and spread violent ideologies. Colorado in particular has one of

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<sup>27</sup> Bigio, J & Vogelstein R. (2019). See footnote 22

<sup>28</sup> Bigio, J & Vogelstein R. (2019). See footnote 22

<sup>29</sup> République Française le Gouvernement. (2018). See footnote 21

<sup>30</sup> République Française le Gouvernement. (2018). See footnote 21

<sup>31</sup> BNED. (2018). See footnote 16

the greatest appetites for violent extremist content per capita in the United States according to the technology company Moonshot CVE.<sup>32</sup>

The French National Plan to Prevent Radicalization emphasizes the role that online platforms and controls can have on the prevention and detection of radicalization.<sup>33</sup> France's National Plan to Prevent Radicalization includes working with digital media platforms to "disrupt the online distribution of terrorist propaganda" by "setting up automatic identification and removal tools so that illegal [extremist] content can be taken down within an hour of posting."<sup>34</sup> While the United States has more lenient regulations around what is acceptable online, all countries must address online recruitment strategies.

France used the Internet Referral Management application system to create a database of illegal content distributed in Europe that can be monitored by Eurpol using research into online "echo chambers" and "filter bubbles" to prevent extremism. The intent is to counter online subject matter that promotes radicalization and "effectively work to promote counter-narrative."<sup>35</sup>

The influence of media platforms was also addressed in the Austrian national standard. Appropriate measures need to be taken by providers, while users should become more media-savvy to address confusing or offensive violent extremist material. Austria stated "recent research indicates that especially women are the target group in this context, as they are harder to reach via public sphere accesses."<sup>36</sup> Austria states, "The internet is neither a place exempt from punishment and responsibilities nor does it provide complete anonymity."<sup>37</sup> Understanding the role the internet plays in our society and educating the community in how to navigate it better can support prevention efforts.

The Maldives has seen a marked increase in social media activity as more women stay at home during the day due to more conservative religious values in the last decade and a half, and frustrated youth turn to the Internet as a means of self-expression and venting. Earlier this year, a report from a non-government organization started a Twitter and social platform firestorm, and the Maldives has called social media a "threat to national security."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Moonshot CVE. (2019). *Colorado Far Right Infographic*. Retrieved from <http://moonshotcve.com/searching-for-hate-in-colorado/>

<sup>33</sup> République Française le Gouvernement. (2018). See footnote 21

<sup>34</sup> République Française le Gouvernement. (2018). p. 10. See footnote 21

<sup>35</sup> République Française le Gouvernement. (2018). p. 11. See footnote 21

<sup>36</sup> BNED. (2018). See footnote 16

<sup>37</sup> BNED. (2018). See footnote 16

<sup>38</sup> Maldives Independent. (2018). Social media a 'threat to national security.' *Maldives Independent*. Retrieved from:

<https://maldivesindependent.com/society/social-media-a-threat-to-national-security-138436>



## **IX. Recommendations**

Colorado continues to face numerous forms of targeted violence with a school shooting as recently as May of 2019 and increasing numbers of hate crimes. The following recommendations are posed in response to the Harvard report from the Summit on Preventing Targeted Violence. A draft was presented to CRC partners and advisory members for feedback, which was incorporated into this report. The recommendations align with the emerging state plan that is being written by the implementers of the Summit on Preventing Targeted Violence. The CRC provides expertise from a psychological perspective and incorporates good practices from other national standards.

### **Primary Prevention**

Primary prevention focuses on preventing disease or injury before it ever occurs by preventing exposure to hazards and unsafe behaviors, and increasing resistance to injury.<sup>39</sup> When applied to radicalization and violent extremism, for example, Austrian national standards described their view of primary prevention as “strengthening social security, democratic culture and human rights education.”<sup>40</sup> This supports the recommendation that providing community education and strengthening our collective awareness of this issue acts as the first line of prevention. Possible action items include:

1. Build upon existing reporting mechanisms by training call-takers within the emergency response systems to listen for indicators of violent extremism and direct and veiled threats to others, and have prepared follow-up questions. This would include 911 dispatchers and Safe-2-Tell workers.
2. Raise awareness through community events held by local entities such as schools or houses of worship to incorporate diverse perspectives and allow for individualized implementation.
3. Build awareness of the general risks and provide adequate training to all relevant service providers.
4. Improve hate crime legislation in Colorado by requiring all police departments to track and address hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents to understand community trends and obtain a comprehensive representation of violent extremism in the state.
5. Professionals such as school staff, teachers, coaches, and other adult community members working directly with teens and young adults should be supported through training and youth programs that promote autonomy, critical thinking, and inclusivity, as well as specific training about violent extremism.

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<sup>39</sup> Institute for Work & Health. (2015). Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Retrieved from: <https://www.iwh.on.ca/what-researchers-mean-by/primary-secondary-and-tertiary-prevention>

<sup>40</sup> BNED. (2015). See footnote 16

6. Support a statewide hub for information, training, resources, services, research, and expert consultation. The CRC seeks to increase its capacity and impact through program expansion and public awareness of the services available.
7. Maintain a full-time position from the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Strategic Community Engagement. It has been instrumental having a full time dedicated staff member, Jenny Presswalla, to support networking. Seed money from the Department of Homeland Security has made it possible to create community-driven efforts. Having this support broadens our scope of outreach and can further connect the state as a whole.

### **Secondary Prevention**

Secondary prevention focuses on working directly with high risk individuals that are showing signs of radicalization and violent intention. This targeted group may be exhibiting some criminal activity or disruptive behavior. Such individuals might benefit from supportive services and countermeasures to prevent the escalation of behavior. For instance, the Austrian national standards address secondary prevention on two fronts by recognizing the needs of potential attackers, and providing anti-discrimination training programs to such groups.<sup>41</sup> This takes into account the importance of understanding the legal and social situations that can be influencing these individuals and offering training programs to counter any extremist ideology.

1. Examine the potential use of interdisciplinary point teams or "situation tables" for high risk individuals in need of multiple, immediate services to reduce risk for violent extremism. The use of Acutely Elevated Risk determinations could be helpful in deciding which cases to review.<sup>42</sup>
2. For community entities that may not have a plan to address targeted violence, teams could be created within houses of worship, sports and recreational facilities, businesses, and other non-governmental entities to handle concerns about violent extremism and people who may be exhibiting dangerous behavior.
3. Provide specialized training about targeted violence to Law Enforcement. This would include how to identify potential indicators of ideologically-motivated violence, how to manage direct and veiled threats, how to utilize community policing methods to address targeted violence, ways to increase the involvement of School Resource Officers in threat management, and further interventions preceding criminal activity.
4. Provide specialized training about targeted violence to mental health and human service professionals. This would include indicators of radicalization, how to

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<sup>41</sup> BNED. (2015). See footnote 16

<sup>42</sup> Russell, H.C. & Taylor, N.E. (2014). See footnote 15

handle veiled and direct threats, when to share information or report concerning behavior, and address concerns and special considerations for confidentiality and duty to warn in such cases.

### **Tertiary Prevention**

Tertiary prevention focuses on individuals who have already committed criminal acts and initiating services for disengagement and reintegration. When addressing violent extremism, the Austrian national standards also supports this element of intervention as they state “tertiary prevention aims at reintegrating and re-socialising individuals by offering social, legal, and socio-psychological care facilities on the one hand and ideology-critical work and discussions on violent-extremist views of the world on the other.”<sup>43</sup>

1. Probation and parole officers need training about violent extremism so they can properly assess risk, require appropriate psychological interventions such as mandated therapy with a mental health expert in this area, and manage concerning or threatening behavior while a person is being monitored in the community.
2. Correctional systems are faced with inmates exhibiting gang behavior and/or violent extremism. Specialized training needs to be developed for correctional staff members to address the unique nature of radicalization and violent extremism in prison systems.
3. Improve wraparound services and create tailored community monitoring programs for individuals with histories of hate crimes, bias-motivated crimes, and other forms of discrimination. For example, probation and parole officers could receive specialized training to better monitor these kinds of offenders in the community.
4. Life After Hate provides online group therapy to former extremists who no longer want to be part of a hate group. Provide funding to explore and pilot online interventions to reduce the likelihood of online radicalization leading to violent actions. The CRC is in communication with Life After Hate and Moonshot CVE about such a program, which will need to be funded, managed, and staffed.

The current recommendations are likely to continue changing as the state works towards these goals. The CRC is committed to continuing efforts to counter violent extremism and prevent targeted violence in the State of Colorado, and responding to the changing climate of ideologically-motivated behavior.

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<sup>43</sup> BNED. (2015). See footnote 16