



ENCOURAGING EARLY REPORTING OF SUSPECTED RADICALISED BEHAVIOURS

*A Resource Kit for
Supporting Concerned
Family, Friends or
Individuals*



FOREWORD




by the SGSecure Programme Office and the Internal Security Department

Dear Sir/Mdm,

The terrorism threat to Singapore remains high. The threat from terrorist groups and their violent ideologies persist. Ongoing developments abroad could also affect our security landscape as extremist elements can exploit overseas conflicts and tap on grievances to promote their radical narratives and recruit supporters. The spread of radical ideologies online has fuelled the self-radicalisation threat in Singapore.

Some of us may directly encounter radicalised individuals or hear about such cases from concerned individuals (e.g., loved ones, friends of the radicalised individual), who may confide in us for advice. Your vigilance and preparedness will play a key role in our defence against terrorism and extremism.

This resource kit aims to provide you with information so that you are:

-  Familiar with the signs of radicalisation and the process after information is submitted;
-  Able to address the barriers to reporting by giving assurance to the concerned individuals and allaying their concerns about reporting suspected radicalisation cases; and
-  Familiar with the channels of reporting so that you can advise the concerned individuals accordingly.

We hope that you will find this resource kit helpful and continue exercising vigilance in your sphere of influence to help us keep Singapore safe and secure. Thank you.



Contact us at SGSecure@mha.gov.sg if you have any questions about this resource kit. If someone you know shows signs of radicalisation, you can contact the Internal Security Department (1800-2626-473) for assistance.

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What is Self-Radicalisation?



Definition of self-radicalisation

Self-radicalisation takes place when individuals consume extremist propaganda and start to believe in the ideology behind them. They then start to act on the ideology, which often calls for **violent attacks** against specific institutions, people, or groups, which can include citizens, groups of a particular race or religious faith or the government.

Websites and social media platforms are potent enablers for radical ideologies to influence vulnerable persons.



- Bite-sized and emotive content sustains the appeal of radical ideologies.
- Ease of access facilitates the wide dissemination of extremist materials to various audiences.
- Online platforms facilitate audience engagement with extremist materials as individuals can “like”, comment, or share such content.

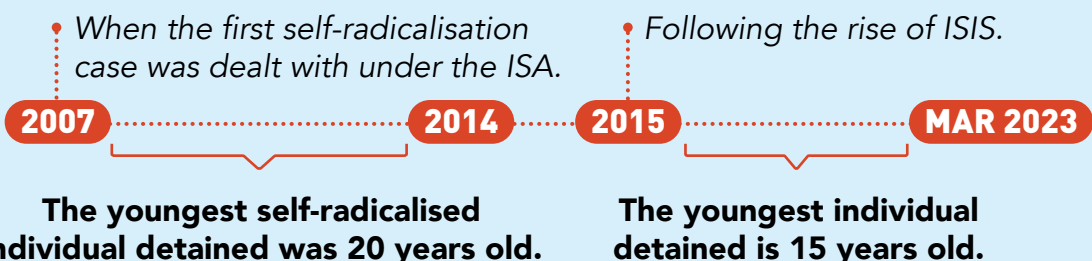
Increase in cases involving self-radicalised Singaporeans.



Self-radicalised individuals are also **getting younger**.



Since 2015, a total of **11** self-radicalised Singaporeans aged 20 or below have been dealt with under the ISA.



Some recent cases of radicalisation in Singapore

Dec 2020:

26-year-old Bangladeshi man detained for involvement in terrorism-related activities and investigated for terrorism financing offences.

2020

Dec 2020:

16-year-old male Singaporean detained for making plans to attack Muslims at two mosques.

2021

Mar 2021:

20-year-old youth, who was angered by the Israel-Palestine conflict, was detained as he had made detailed plans and preparations to conduct knife attacks against Jews at a synagogue.



2022



Apr 2022:

29-year-old male Singaporean detained for making plans to travel overseas to take part in armed violence.

Dec 2022:

18-year-old male ISIS supporter was detained for making three attack plans against targets in Singapore, including fatally stabbing non-Muslims in dark alleys.



Dec 2022:

15-year-old youth, an ISIS and Al-Qaeda supporter, was detained. He had considered conducting attacks in Singapore, including knife attacks in popular tourist areas in Singapore and being a suicide bomber. He is the youngest individual to-date dealt with under the ISA for terrorism-related activities.

2023

Jan 2023:

16-year-old youth was issued with a Restriction Order. He was radicalised by online ISIS propaganda, propagated his support for ISIS by creating and uploading three ISIS propaganda videos onto social media.



! Timely intervention is key to helping the radicalised individual and the society at large.

What are the signs of radicalisation?

Radicalised individuals can be of **any age, gender, and belong to any ethnic, religious, or socio-economic group**. Time is of the essence when someone displays signs of radicalisation. **Often, family, friends and colleagues are in the best position to spot the signs of radicalisation.**

Radicalised individuals **often show** some **tangible acts and observable signs**, such as:

Display of insignia or symbols in support of extremist/terrorist groups
e.g. displaying ISIS flag as one's social media profile photo



Frequently surfing radical websites
e.g. frequently viewing websites containing terrorist propaganda and videos of foreign radical preachers



Posting/sharing extremist views on social media platforms like expressing support/admiration for terrorists/terrorist groups as well as the use of violence
e.g. expressing support for the March 2019 Christchurch attacks and describing the perpetrator as a "hero"



Sharing extremist views with friends and relatives
e.g. claiming that it is legitimate to kill the enemies of one's religion



Making remarks that promote ill-will or hatred towards people of other races or religions



Expressing intent to participate in acts of violence overseas or in Singapore
e.g. expressing desire to fight in overseas conflict zones or to carry out terror attacks in Singapore



Inciting others to participate in acts of violence



It will also be useful to be aware of any media coverage on terrorism-related incidents, as there may be helpful resources to aid your understanding of the terrorism and radicalisation threat, and to look out for suspicious indicators.

What happens after the concerned individual reports the radicalised individual?

When a report is made, the Internal Security Department (ISD) will carry out checks to **establish the veracity of the information provided**, including speaking to the informer if possible. **The identity of the informer will be protected.**



No further action will be taken if investigations reveal that the person is **not radicalised**.



If the person is in the **early stages of radicalisation**, he or she may be referred for **counselling**, and may not need to be dealt with under the ISA.



If the person is assessed to pose a **security threat**, he/she will be dealt with under the ISA and provided with **rehabilitation**. ISD adopts a **comprehensive and holistic approach** in the rehabilitation of the detainees and Restriction Order supervisees, comprising **religious, psychological and social rehabilitation**.

Early reporting helps the radicalised individual

receive holistic, intensive, and long-term rehabilitation. Each rehabilitation programme is customised to a detainee's or Restriction Order supervisee's unique circumstances, with extensive collaboration between the various rehabilitation stakeholders to **maximise the chances of successful rehabilitation** for the individual.



What is the approach to rehabilitation?



RELIGIOUS

- At least once a month, all detainees and supervisees under Restriction Order must attend religious counselling sessions aimed at imparting proper religious teachings and interpretations to counter the radical ideology they had imbibed.
- Detainees are also given access to supplementary materials, such as video lectures and books by reputed religious scholars and teachers.



PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Throughout their detention and even after they are released on Restriction Orders, detainees work with psychologists to address non-ideological issues, such as their propensity for hatred and violence and their vulnerability to radical influence.
- The psychologists also regularly assess the behavioural and cognitive aspects of their progress, and help them reframe the faulty reasoning that underlies their radical beliefs.



SOCIAL

- Detainees are granted weekly family visits to preserve their familial connections as much as possible.
- An aftercare officer is assigned to each family to provide social and other forms of support, where relevant.
- ISD case officers regularly interact with detainees to offer an extra source of social interaction and support, and continue to supervise them through the Restriction Order regime to help them reintegrate smoothly into society, thereby reducing their risk of returning to the path of radicalisation.
- The Inter-Agency Aftercare Group (ACG) provides those dealt with under the ISA, and their families, with emotional, social and financial support through its network of community welfare organisations.



What should I do when a concerned individual approaches me for advice?

You will be **helping the concerned individual** when you show your **CARE**

C

reate a safe space for the concerned individual to share his/her concerns/worries/doubts with you.

Conduct the discussion at an appropriate place.

- Meeting face-to-face with the concerned individual is preferred to build rapport and trust.



Reassure the concerned individual that the sharing will be kept confidential.

- However, there is a need to report immediately if the information provided suggests imminent threat to lives and property.



Acknowledge the feelings that the concerned individual is experiencing, e.g., guilt, shame, fear, uncertainty, and the difficulty he/she faces in coming forward. Show empathy towards him/her and be non-judgmental.



Express affirmation that the concerned individual is doing the right thing by not keeping his/her suspicions to himself/herself.



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ask the concerned individual for more details on his/her suspicions and assess if they are aligned with the signs of radicalisation (ref. [pg 6](#) for signs of radicalisation).



R

Reassure the concerned individual that early reporting will allow the authorities to intervene quickly to avert a tragedy, including to the radicalised person. Individuals at risk of becoming radicalised can receive help, guidance, and counselling, before they potentially harm themselves and/or others (ref. [pg 7](#) for what happens after a report is made).

Avoid judging the radicalised person as a perpetrator/terrorist. Rather, portray him/her as a person who is misguided and needs help.



Refrain from any suggestion/narrative that may imply that the concerned individual is responsible for the radicalised person's behaviour or that the reporting should have been done earlier (i.e., avoid guilt-tripping).



Highlight that he/she is doing the right thing by reporting for the benefit and safety of the individual and wider community, and he/she is not condemning a friend/family member to life in prison.



Bring up previous case examples where radicalised individuals were reported, and harm prevented, radicalised individuals were rehabilitated (ref. [pg 13](#) for some examples).



E

Encourage the concerned individual to take action after the session by promptly contacting the ISD Counter-Terrorism hotline (1800-2626-473), calling the Police (1800-255-0000), reporting via the SGSecure App, or contacting the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) Helpline (1800-774-774-7) (ref. [pg 7](#) for what happens after a report is made).



Identity of the informer will be protected.



If signs of radicalisation are present, remind him/her to treat the situation as an emergency that requires his/her assistance.



Remind the concerned individual to not try to counsel possibly radicalised individuals on his/her own.

If assessed to be necessary

- Provide details of the relevant community-based resources available to the concerned individual, e.g., RRG or general helplines that the public can call if he/she needs emotional or psychological support (<https://www.gov.sg/article/call-these-helplines-if-you-need-emotional-or-psychological-support>).
- You may also check in on the concerned individual again, as he/she may feel distressed or traumatised after reporting his/her friend/family.

What are the views of experienced practitioners?

Ustaz Dr Mohamed Bin Ali, Co-Chairman, RRG



To concerned individuals:

Research has shown that immediate families play a key role in preventing a child from further radicalisation. Hence, reporting is to be encouraged and understood as an action taken in the interest of their loved ones.



Share your experiences in rehabilitating a radicalised individual.

Rehabilitation for radicalised individuals is an important and effective strategy to deal with the current threat of extremism.

There are three important steps in the RRG counselling methodology. Firstly, the extrication of radical thoughts and misinterpretation of religious teachings. Secondly, replacing these negative ideologies with the correct ones. Finally, instilling values of religious moderation, peace and harmonious living among the different communities here.



What advice do you have for concerned individuals who are hesitant to report possible cases of radicalisation to the authorities?

Empowering families with a correct understanding of the religion will enable them to detect and counter any irregularities in their children's behaviour and understanding of the religion. Extremists often hide their true intentions behind a religious veneer. Hence, adherents of the religion should be nimble and savvy enough to uncover the truth and not succumb to their violent ideologies.

If radicalisation in the family is suspected, parents and other family members will be helping their child if they report the case to the authorities as early as possible. Research has shown that immediate families play a key role in preventing a child from further radicalisation. Hence, reporting is to be encouraged and understood as an action taken in the interest of their loved ones.

The family has always been important in the stability of the society. Ensuring the resilience of family members is a giant step towards countering extremism and reducing its influence in the community. By helping family members who display out-of-the-norm behaviour, it will go a long way to help reduce the threat of violent extremism.

What advice do you have for the reader of this resource kit, whom concerned individual may approach for advice?

Understanding that the family unit is the first line of defence, efforts must not be spared to mitigate the challenges faced by parents. For a start, to equip all families with tools to identify tell-tale signs of radicalisation. This is because family members are more likely to spot the tell-tale signs given their familiarity and close proximity to their loved ones.

Ustaz Ahmad Saiful Rijal Bin Hassan, Counsellor, RRG



If someone asks you for advice on suspected radicalisation:

It is important to listen attentively, show empathy to understand their perspectives, provide a safe space for discussion and provide relevant resources.



Share your experiences in rehabilitating a radicalised individual.

Rehabilitation in the form of counselling requires a lot of patience and the relevant knowledge to address the issues with the detainees. We start by getting to know them and understand what motivated them to be radicalised. After which, we will focus our discussions on ideological concepts such as Jihad and Caliphate.

What advice do you have for concerned individuals who are hesitant to report possible cases of radicalisation to the authorities?

It is important to highlight cases as early as possible to prevent the person from getting deeply entrenched in terrorists' ideologies. Family or friends may consult RRG if they have any doubts.

What advice do you have for the reader of this resource kit, whom concerned individual may approach for advice?

Radicalisation may occur to anyone. It is important to listen attentively, show empathy to understand their perspectives, provide a safe space for discussion and provide relevant resources.

Are there any success stories of rehabilitation?

There are individuals who have **successfully rehabilitated and turned their lives around**. This resource kit provides two such examples, and you may refer to <https://www.mha.gov.sg/isd/stay-in-the-know> to find out more.



JAN 2020

A 17-year-old secondary school student "Daniel" (not his real name) was detained under the ISA.

- He was radicalised by a foreign online contact into supporting ISIS.
- He staunchly believed in ISIS's violent cause and was willing to assist ISIS in its terrorist activities, including its online propaganda efforts.

▶ ISD worked closely with the RRG and the ACG to rehabilitate "Daniel" and correct his radical ideology.



Monthly sessions with the RRG religious counsellor to help "Daniel" improve his religious knowledge.



A psychologist also worked with "Daniel" to reduce his vulnerability to radical influences.



"Daniel"'s mentor, a RRG counsellor, guided him on his personal goals and motivated him on his rehabilitation.



Arrangements were also made for him to continue with his studies and sit for his national examinations while in detention. He received extensive tutoring support from RRG volunteers who were also MOE-trained teachers and made tremendous improvements in his academic performance.

2020

He scored four distinctions out of five subjects in his GCE Normal (Technical) Level examinations.

2021

He passed all his subjects in his GCE Normal (Academic) Level examinations.

▶ "Daniel" was receptive to these efforts and made significant progress in his rehabilitation. He also grew closer to his family members who had been visiting him regularly while in detention and supporting him in his rehabilitation.

JAN 2022

"Daniel" was released on a Restriction Order in view of the good progress in his rehabilitation. Since his release, he has successfully enrolled in his chosen course of study at a post-secondary institution.





MAR 2021

A 20-year-old self-radicalised Singaporean, Amirull, was detained under the ISA.

▶ ISD has been working closely with the RRG to counsel Amirull.



A RRG counsellor met him monthly. The counsellor helped Amirull improve his religious knowledge, and embrace a pro-social understanding of Islamic principles. As a result, Amirull has renounced his radical beliefs in armed jihad and the use of violence.



He now sees jihad as caring for his parents, improving himself and contributing to society. He also understands the importance of living harmoniously with people of other races and religions in Singapore, and to verify any religious information that he is unsure about with locally accredited religious teachers and scholars.

▶ He was also engaged regularly by ISD case officers and a psychologist. He has come to understand that while one may sympathise with the plight of people caught in the crosshairs of a conflict such as that between Israel and Palestine, we should never resort to or advocate violence as a solution.

The psychological counselling sessions also helped Amirull to strengthen his critical thinking and emotion regulation skills, which would reduce his vulnerability to radical influences.



▶ While in detention, Amirull was also given access to educational and self-improvement materials such as videos and articles. He developed a clearer positive identity and acquired practical skills such as goal setting. A RRG volunteer also provided him with weekly English lessons to facilitate his plans to pursue further studies.

▶ Amirull responded well to his rehabilitation, with the extensive support of the RRG and his family.

MAR 2023

Amirull was released on a Restriction Order in view of the good progress in his rehabilitation.



We hope you find this resource kit helpful. If you have doubts on whether you should intervene in a case of suspected radicalisation, remember **you will be helping the individual through early reporting** so that he/she can receive **help, guidance, and counselling. Your prompt action will help save lives, including that of the radicalised individual.**

Thank you for playing your role in keeping Singapore safe and secure.

