

I am worried somebody I know is viewing violence as an option... What can I do?

If you are worried somebody you know may be viewing violence as an option there are a range of strategies and services that may be of assistance.

Someone may be viewing violence as an option

When someone begins to separate from their family, friends and community or demonstrates a significant move towards extreme beliefs and attitudes, that person may be in the early stages of viewing violence as an option. If that same person begins to advocate or promote the use of violence to achieve an ideological, political or religious goal, it is important to contact local authorities as soon as possible to get them assistance.

Open communication

The best way to deal with the problem of someone showing signs of viewing violence as an option is to maintain open communication with the person. A positive relationship and open communication can be an effective intervention in itself.

To help them, listen to their reasons for becoming involved with a radical ideology or group. It is also important to separate their behavior from who they are as a person. Even if you disagree with what they are saying, it is important to find some way to let them know they are accepted and that you are there to help and violence should never be an option.

Early intervention

Early intervention is best. However, before you try to intervene, try to fully understand a person's situation and motivation.

A significant event, or a build-up of incidents, can trigger and/or accelerate the pathway to violence process. If issues can be dealt with before they become large problems, this may prevent a person from viewing violence as an option.

When to call 9-1-1:

In the event that someone indicates they are going to harm themselves or other people, this should be taken seriously and must be acted upon immediately by calling 9-1-1 or your local law enforcement agency.

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Signs of trouble may include:

- Increasingly erratic, unsafe, or aggressive behaviors.
- Hostile feelings of injustice or perceived wrongdoing.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Marginalization or distancing from friends and colleagues.
- Changes in performance at work.
- Sudden and dramatic changes in home life or in personality.
- Financial difficulties.
- Pending civil or criminal litigation.
- Observable grievance threats and plans of retribution.

You should not assume that any one of these problems will lead a person to a pathway of violence, but intervention and assistance from immediate family, supervisors, human resource departments, and the community to help deal with any of these types of issues can be particularly effective in preventing a person from viewing violence as an option.

You are not alone

Many people and communities have helped to move people away from radicalization to violent extremism. As a friend, family, or community member providing assistance, it is important to look after yourself as well. Speak with trusted people in your community and your local authorities to address your concerns.

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