



Writing Guidelines for VERA-2R Risk Assessment Reports

There are pertinent guidelines relating to VERA-2R reports. These guidelines reflect standard good practice for risk judgments and risk formulation. They are relevant for the VERA-2R as well as other risk assessment approaches. The guidelines are presented in six steps identified below.

1: Collect, Structure and Document Available Evidence and Information

All available information and evidence should be structured and documented into the appropriate indicators that are included in the VERA-2R protocol. Each of the indicators should be identified as present or not present, described for relevance and rated. Severity ratings for each indicator must be consistent with the criterion-level definitions that are provided in the VERA-2R User Manual. These ratings identify the severity levels of the indicators at the specific time of assessment and facilitate the Identification of change in the severity of indicators in follow-up assessments. All available information and evidence pertaining to each of the indicators must be documented to support the severity rating provided. If an indicator does not appear to be present, this should be identified. All information should be considered in terms of its source and credibility. Missing information related to any of the VERA-2R indicators should be identified. The acquisition of missing information should be recommended whenever possible. If relevant, any additional case-specific indicators can be identified, included and explained.

2: Determine Critical Indicators

The most relevant indicators for the individual under assessment should be identified. All risk supporting indicators, risk mitigating (protective) indicators, mental health and other additional indicators related to the individual being assessed should be reviewed from the information available and considered. After analysis, the indicators recognized as having a significant impact on violent extremist behaviour should be identified. Protective indicators that have a risk mitigating influence on the individual should be identified and discussed in terms of their relevance and importance. In some cases, a limited number of risk indicators may be sufficient to determine a professional judgment of risk. The final risk assessment decision should be defensible based on the available evidence and information. Consensus risk level ratings are encouraged whenever possible.

3: Risk Formulation

A risk formulation (or risk narrative) for the individual under assessment should be constructed from the available evidence and the evaluation of all the VERA-2R indicators. The risk formulation should integrate the critical elements obtained from the risk supporting indicators, risk mitigating (protective) indicators and the mental health information. Results obtained from all other professional assessments and instruments should be included in the risk formulation. The risk indicators that contribute to the susceptibility to violent extremism and/or those risk indicators that contribute to the continuance of violent extremism should be identified. Risk indicators can be clustered in the risk formulation when they are interacting and contributing to the risk of the individual. When present, identify protective indicators that are considered to

decrease the risk of violent extremist behaviour and discuss the role of the risk mitigating (protective) factors.

4: Development of Risk Scenarios

All available information and all present risk and protective indicators should be considered in constructing risk scenarios. These indicators may change over time due to judicial decisions, personal changes, outside influences and other relevant factors. Risk scenarios should apply to current risk and protective indicators and include motivational, network, intention and capacity elements relevant to potential future violent extremist acts when considered. Realistic scenarios can be discussed with other professionals who are familiar with the individual being assessed and the SPJ methodology. Examples of risk scenarios may include the following:

1. *Same Case Risk Scenario* which is similar in context to the most recent violent extremist or terrorist act undertaken by the individual;
2. *Sideways Case Risk Scenario* which considers potential changes to the type of offence such as deviations in weapons, methodology employed, victim selection and/or other differences due to the evolution of the individual;
3. *Worst Case Scenario* which considers the potential for a more serious violent extremist act;
4. *Better Case Risk Scenario* which considers the context where the motivation for committing a violent extremist action has decreased and where the individual may commit a less serious violent extremist act in the future or not commit a future violent extremist act.

The risk scenarios employed should only be those specifically relevant to the individual being assessed.

5: Identify Risk Management Strategies

Risk management strategies and programs should be identified in the risk assessment report when pertinent. These strategies and programs should generally relate to the principle of risk-needs-responsivity and be designed to mitigate the likelihood of future violent extremist actions, to reduce the danger to public safety and to address risks to identified individuals or locations. Risk management strategies should address the concerns identified in the risk scenarios, focus on dynamic risk indicators and be relevant to individual needs. Risk management may involve individual and/or group administered programs specifically designed to counter and prevent violent extremism and also include supervision and other individual behavioral controls. This may entail controls on communication and other activity restrictions. Risk management should include additional referrals to relevant professionals and/or agencies for further consultation. When relevant and appropriate, individually focused intervention and/or treatment can be included.

6: Final Risk Judgment

The VERA-2R risk assessment should include a final judgment of the risk and threat posed by the individual being evaluated and related riskmanagement recommendations. This final risk judgment should be supported by the evidence and information available for the assessment. The purpose of the risk assessment and the context for the risk judgment should be included. If there is continuing risk of extremist violence, this should be identified and described within the context of the individual's situation. The likelihood of recidivism should be included in the final risk summary. Where relevant, the potential for other types of violent extremism or the potential for constructive reintegration back into the community should be considered in addition to the risk management strategies recommended.

