



COUNTERING EXTREMIST
ACTIVITY:
CASE STUDY ACTIVITY 2



Reference Guide for Facilitating Difficult Conversations about Countering Extremist Activities within the Department of Defense

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Reference Guide for Facilitating Difficult Conversations about Countering Extremist Activity

As Service members or Department of Defense civilian employees, we each take an Oath of Office upon entering into public service. The framers of the Constitution included the requirement to take an oath in the Constitution itself. While the specific wording of that oath may vary depending on the individual role in which you serve, all of our oaths include the commitment to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic, and to well and faithfully discharge our duties. Because we each took an oath to support and defend the Constitution, and to do our jobs to the best of our ability, we expect military Service members and DoD civilian employees to be guided in their actions by a professional ethic that prioritizes the team, the mission, and the Nation. You are essential to our success, and we need you on our team.

ACTIVITY GOALS

- Explain the effects of extremist activities on unit climate and culture.
- Demonstrate extremist activities prevention and response strategies.

MATERIALS

- Podium (optional)
- Computer (to display case study, if necessary)
- Dry Erase Easel with markers
- Extremist activity case study
- Chairs for large group discussion
- Activity Handouts
- Reference Sheet (Definitions)

PHYSICAL SETTING

- Small Group Circle (Seated) or Horseshoe with open facing easel.
- Recommended Small Group size, 15-20 personnel

PROCEDURES

1. Read Activity Goals **Note: Instructor will not read red text**
2. Trainer will provide Part 2 Activity handout.
3. Audience will have 30 minutes read the case study and identify risk factors, protective factors, and prevention strategies.
4. Each group will identify a spokesperson who will brief their risk and protective factors and prevention strategies. Facilitator or Groups are allowed to ask clarifying questions. 20 minutes
5. Facilitator led group discussion using questions below - Instructor will not be part of the group process, only facilitate discussion. 30 minutes
6. Breaks will be taken as needed, 10 minutes on every hour is a guideline and not a requirement. However, a 10-minute break should be offered not less than once every 90 minutes.



Christopher Paul Hasson

- US Coast Guard Lieutenant
- Former USMC and Army National Guardsman
- Secret Clearance (Declined TS/SCI)
- No previous derogatory information
- Acquisitions Officer
- 49 years old and married with two children



CDSE

Center for Development of Security Excellence

CASE STUDY

KINETIC VIOLENCE – A Positive Outcome

WHAT HAPPENED

Christopher Paul Hasson was arrested on February 15, 2019, which prevented him from possibly carrying out acts of violence. His arrest followed a multi-year investigation that included monitoring the use of his U.S. Government automated information system. He pleaded guilty in October 2019, and on January 31, 2020, at the U.S. District Court in Greenbelt, MD, was sentenced to 160 months in prison on four federal counts, to include three felony weapons charges and one felony drug charge. Hasson owned a residence in Silver Spring, MD, and worked at the U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Hasson self-identified as a “White Nationalist” for over 30 years in writings advocating for “focused violence” in order to establish a white homeland. Review of Hasson’s email accounts, saved documents, text messages, and Internet searches revealed he was inspired by racist murderers, stockpiled assault weapons, studied violence, and intended to exact retribution on minorities and those he considered traitors. He admitted from at least March 2016 through early February 2019 that he used various email accounts, including an overseas encrypted e-mail account, to order the opioid Tramadol from various illegal Internet-based distributors.

Hasson prepared to take action and used his government computer to read the manifestos of mass murderers such as Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik, Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, and Eric Rudolph, the 1996 Atlanta Olympics bomber. He performed Internet searches and developed lists of potential targets, including media personalities and current and former elected officials. He conducted attack and targeting research and planning, and operational cover support activities. He imitated actions contained in some of the extremist manifestos listed above such as purchasing steroids.

INDICATO

- Associating with extremist group or with individuals’ espousing extremist views
- Expressing ill will toward U.S. Government
- Possessing illegal weapons and/or illegal drugs
- Misuse of U.S. Government automated information system

IMPACT

The Christopher Paul Hasson case was an example of a positive insider threat outcome in that an insider threat hostile act was prevented by an effective insider threat program, which included user activity monitoring that identified attack and targeting research and planning and operational cover support. The case highlighted a holistic approach and the successful collaboration between the organization's insider threat program and other agencies. Had his activities not been detected or detected in time, he might have been able to carry them out against some of the same individuals whom he researched and placed on target lists. The result could have been devastating.

Lastly the Hasson case illustrates the complex and unpredictable nature of human behavior and the fact an individual's thoughts or ideations are not transparent to others, making it more challenging to detect and report questionable or anomalous behavior. In his case, while having researched and shown an interest in white nationalism and other racist ideology, some of his past performance evaluations characterized him differently, even to the point of being an advocate of equal opportunity. This case also raised the issue of balancing safety and security with First and Second Amendment protections.

ADDITIONAL

Christopher Paul Hasson's performance evaluations characterized him more as an advocate of equal opportunity rather than a "White Nationalist." Hasson used his U.S. Government systems for many of his activities, to include research, purchases, and communications.

Consider the following questions:

- How can an insider threat program identify anomalous behavior?
- Why is User Activity Monitoring a part of an effective insider threat program?
- How do we balance the protection of First and Second Amendment rights with Safety and National Security?

Resources for further exploration:

- [Insider Threat Indicators in User Activity Monitoring](#)
- [Insider Threat Privacy and Civil Liberties INT 260.16 eLearning Course](#)
- [Insider Threat Potential Risk Indicators](#)

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!

Contact the appropriate POC to report any observed potential risk indicators:

Name: _____ Agency/Department: _____

Title: Supervisor/Security Officer/ITP Senior Official/ITP Manager

LEARN.
PERFORM.
PROTECT.

CASE STUDY REFERENCE: CHRISTOPHER HASSON

Risk factors are attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with negative outcomes for organizations or units. Risk factors are linked to a higher likelihood of negative outcomes, such as suicide, sexual harassment, and sexual assault and are also linked to a lower likelihood of positive outcomes, such as higher performance, readiness, and retention.

Risk factors are variables associated with a higher probability of a negative situation or outcome (e.g., a soldier with a history of suicidal tendencies goes into a combat mission as infantry).

Protective factors are attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with positive outcomes for organizations or units. Protective factors are linked to a higher likelihood of positive outcomes, such as improved performance or readiness and higher retention and are also linked to a lower likelihood of negative outcomes, such as suicide, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.

Protective factors are variables associated with a lower probability of a negative situation or outcome (e.g., a soldier moves to a base near their family).

Both risk and protective behaviors are summaries or conclusions of observable behaviors.

Use case study to identify risk and protective factors in your assigned domain.

What are the <u>RISK</u> FACTORS that were observed or could possibly exist in the case study?
The following are some examples:
Active participation in planning hostile acts
Strong support for White nationalism
Racist ideology
Questionable computer searches on equipment used for official business
Possession of opioids
Writings advocated “focused violence” to establish a white homeland
Stockpiled assault weapons and studied violence
Obtained manifestos of mass murderers
What are some <u>PROTECTIVE</u> FACTORS that were observed or could possibly exist in the case study?
The following responses are some examples:
Positive Insider Threat program
Command team members noticing behaviors
Insider threat collaboration with other agencies
User activity monitoring
Ensure all command members receive Insider Threat Awareness Courses
Social media mining

ACTIVITY HANDOUT
Develop Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Prevention Strategies for your domain.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES	
Primary Strategies:	
Secondary Strategies	
Tertiary Strategies	

Primary prevention strategies are policies and programs designed to transpire prior to problematic behaviors.

Secondary prevention strategies are policies and programs designed to immediately respond after the occurrence of situation.

Tertiary prevention strategies include policies and programs designed for long-term responses to mitigate the lasting effects of problematic behaviors.

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitate the activity while sitting in the small group circle with the following questions.

Your Initial reaction

- What are your thoughts about extremist activities after the reading the case study?
- What thoughts did you experience while reading the case study?

- How does it feel to hear some of your other group members express their feelings about the case?

Where do these reactions come from?

- What stood out to you in the case study?
- What surprised you in the case study?
- How does one's upbringing affect thoughts or behaviors about active participation in extremist activities?
- What was something new you learned from the case study?

How does it look in your life and organizations?

- How can active participation in extremist activities affect your life?
- How do you see such activities today?
- What does active participation in extremist activities look like in the Military?
- What is the cost to a group or an organization if indicators or behaviors are not addressed?

How to apply this new information to your organization

- What will you do with this information now that you have it?
- How will you address issues of active participation in extremist activities back in your organization?
- What strategies would you take to eliminate such activities from their unit?

SUMMARY

Restate Activity Goals:

- Explain the effects of extremist activities on unit climate and culture.
- Demonstrate extremist activities prevention and response strategies.

Instructor Read: Actively espousing ideologies that encourage discrimination, hate, and harassment against others will not be tolerated within our (unit/command/etc.). The core principles of dignity and mutual respect to guide the actions of the personnel in this unit/organization at all times, to include our conversations here today.