

Project Safe Space

North West

Challenging the Stereotypes created by violent extremism and terrorism

A programme of activities designed by young people for young people

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A

Introduction

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about the Programme

Project Safe Space North West was originally a conference for young people from across the North West which took place in spring 2009 and was part of a series of similar events across the country.

The conference aimed to give young people a safe space to talk about violent extremism and terrorism initiated by young people through the work of the North West Regional Youth Work Unit, UK Youth Parliament and supporting Youth Services.

It was designed and delivered by young people who identified as being from predominantly “White British” and “Muslim British” backgrounds working with support from youth workers from Youth Services across the North West.

It consisted of a programme of workshops and activities followed by a debate between young people and decisions makers such as Senior Police Officers. Many of the young people who attended the event, expressed a desire to deliver similar events in their own areas.

This document is a set of instructions for delivering the programme originally designed for the morning of the conference, so that youth organisations can work with young people to deliver similar work based on the learning from this event.

The programme can be delivered by professionals working with young people or, groups of young people can be supported to deliver it to their peers.

B

Project Safe Space

activities

1 Pass the toilet roll

To act as an icebreaker for the group so that they can learn more about each other.

2 What is Terrorism?

To enable the group to begin discussing their opinions on terrorism and extremism in a safe and structured way.

3 Draw a terrorist?

To encourage the group to explore what stereotypes are present amongst young people relating to terrorism and extremism.

4 Spot the terrorist?

To enable the group to confront and to be challenged upon their own stereotypes and prejudices.

5 The Headline game

To explore the media's role in creating stereotypes.

The activities within the programme enable groups of young people to explore the stereotypes and prejudices created by violent extremism and terrorism and aim to give young people a safe space to talk about them.

who should use the Programme

Project Safe Space North West programme was developed with tensions between the “Muslim” and “Non-Muslim” communities as the background context. However the activities within it could be used to explore all forms of prejudices and tensions between a variety of communities that are connected to terrorism or extremism.

The programme consists of a series of activities, designed to take place one after the other which use youth work and informal education techniques. Young people taking part will need to be able to participate in group discussions for this programme to be successful. It **should not** be used to target any individual or group from a particular cultural background in an attempt to prevent them “becoming radicalised” or “involved in extremism”. It **should** be used in a wider community setting to challenge some of prejudices and stereotypes that occur as a result of terrorist or extremist acts, and to allow young people to explore their responses and feelings in a safe environment.

The programme can be used with groups of young people of all backgrounds and cultures and works best in a mixed faith and heritage setting. It is highly likely during this discussion that members of the group will express comments that are based on prejudice; the programme is designed to examine these concepts safely in mixed settings.

However when working with groups that are likely to express overtly racist beliefs, it may be more appropriate to ensure all of the group are from a similar cultural background or faith.



Project Safe Space

notes

- Take the time to read through the programme before you start, you will need to prepare some things before hand.
- Use the activities in the order they are in the pack, they can be completed in just over half a day back to back, but can be split over several sessions.
- The range of activities are simply tools to create discussion about prejudice and stereotypes and completing each task is less important than the discussion they provoke.
- The ground rules from the first activity will be an important tool in challenging comments based on prejudice, and preventing the group from harm.
- During the programme the group need to be comfortable to discuss prejudice, including any of their own, but a facilitator should always ensure that participants know that these comments cause harm and they should not go unquestioned or challenged.

the facilitator's role

The facilitators role is to support the group through the activities and question and challenge and comments that are based on prejudice. These comments may be either intentionally or unintentionally overtly racist or comments based on ignorance of other cultures. It is important that the facilitator questions and discusses them, rather than simply stating that they are not acceptable and attempting to stop them being said.

It will be even more effective if members of the group are supported to question and challenge. It is a skill that both the facilitator and they group can develop throughout the programme. By supporting a group to do this they are then likely to do it in their wider class or youth group setting. Asking questions around these themes will help:

- **Where has the person making the comment got their information from? Is it based upon reliable facts or prejudice?** Often these comments are based on ignorance and will not be substantiated. It is helpful here to have some knowledge of the culture that is being talked about, however there maybe be other members of the group who can supply this, particularly in a mixed setting.
- **How would someone from the culture or background that is being talked about feel if they heard the comment?**
- **How the person making the comment would feel if it was made about them based on their religion/ethnicity/gender/age etc?** These help the person making the comment recognise the damage it causes. The facilitator may also want to explore how other members of the group felt when hearing the comment.
- **Were the comments acceptable to the group?** Using the ground rules from the first activity may be helpful here.

1

Pass the toilet roll

aims

To act as an icebreaker for the group and enable them to learn each others names and backgrounds.

To enable to the group to agree ground rules around how they will interact and treat each other during the programme.

activity time

5 – 10 minutes

materials

- 1 toilet roll – clean
- Paper or flip chart
- Pens

note

You should keep these ground rules to hand during the other activities, and refer back to what the group has agreed during any heated discussions or disagreements.

instructions

1. Pass a toilet roll around the group. Tell the group they can take as many pieces as they like but they must take at least one.

2. When this is done explain to the group that for every piece of toilet roll they have taken they must tell the group one thing about themselves. (If it didn't come out in the game, ask the group to share their names.)

3. Pass the toilet roll around the group a second time. Tell the group they can take as many pieces as they like but they must take at least one

4. When this is done explain to the group that for every piece of toilet roll they have taken they must tell the group one ground rule they think the group should have for these activities. A ground rule is a statement about how the group should behave and talk to each other.

5. As each person names a ground rule record it on a piece of paper or flip chart

6. Discuss with the group what has been written down on the paper, as well as if they agree with and understand the ground rules that are on there. They may feel others should be added. During the discussion you should stress to the group that the activities are likely to create strong emotions and opinions and not everyone will agree, and they should respect that everyone has a right to express their own opinion.

7. Remove, add to or alter the ground rules based on the discussion. However remember it is the process of discussing ground rules with the group that is important rather than simply what ends up written on the paper.

2

What is Terrorism?

aims

To enable the group to begin discussing their opinions on terrorism and extremism in a safe and structured way.

To enable the group to explore how their opinions have changed as a result of taking part in the other activities in the programme.

activity time

30 – 45 minutes

materials

- Printout or photocopy the ten **What is Terrorism?** discussion cards – cut along the dotted lines.

- Pen
- Paper

tip:

This activity can also be used with larger groups (50 plus). To do this copy the statements from the discussion cards onto a Powerpoint, and discuss the statements in a large “roving microphone” style debate. The answers the group give can be recorded on the Powerpoint as you go along.

instructions

This activity is to be done twice, once at the start of the programme following the icebreaker session and repeated at the end having completed the other activities.

at the start of the programme:

1. Place the discussion cards in order from **1 – 9** (card 10 is not used at this stage of the activity)
2. Ask a member of the group to take the first card and read it out.
3. Ask members of the group to answer the question, and encourage them to explain why. The group does not have to reach agreement on a single answer, and it is unlikely that they will.
4. Record the answer/answers on a piece of paper.
5. Repeat this with the remaining cards **2 – 9**.

at the end of the programme:

1. Place the discussion cards in order **1 – 10**.
2. Ask a member of the group to take the first card and read it out.
3. Show the group the answer/answers they recorded on paper from the first part of the activity.
4. Encourage the group to think about and discuss the question again.
5. Ask members of the group if their opinion has changed, and if so why.
6. Repeat this with the remaining cards **2 – 10**.

What is Terrorism? - discussion card

1

What is terrorism?

What is Terrorism? - discussion card

6

**Do you believe all
'freedom fighters' are
'terrorists'?**

What is Terrorism? - discussion card

2

**Are you afraid of
terrorism?**

What is Terrorism? - discussion card

7

**Do you think the
media has influenced
terrorism?**

What is Terrorism? - discussion card

3

**What does terrorism
mean to you?**

What is Terrorism? - discussion card

8

**What causes
terrorism and why?**

What is Terrorism? - discussion card

4

**How does terrorism
affect you?**

What is Terrorism? - discussion card

9

**Where does the
fear of terrorism
come from?**

What is Terrorism? - discussion card

5

**Were you aware of
terrorism before 9/11?**

What is Terrorism? - discussion card

10

**Has your opinion on
terrorism changed after
doing these activities?**

3

Draw a Terrorist

aims

To encourage the group to explore what stereotypes are present amongst young people relating to terrorism and extremism.

To enable the group to open reflect on their own stereotypes without being directly challenged.

activity time

30 minutes

materials

- Pens
- Paper or flip chart

introduction

Explain to the group;

“I went to another youth project and asked a group of mixed faith young people to draw what they thought a terrorist looks like”.

instructions

- 1.** Ask the group to draw what they think the young people at the other youth project came up with. This should be done in groups of 3 – 10 people.
- 2.** Whilst the group are drawing the picture use the following questions to get the discussion moving?
 - Ask them to explain what they are drawing.
 - Ask them where they think the young people in the youth project got their ideas from.
 - Ask them if they think all young people will share the same ideas.
 - Ask them if they think the ideas will change between young people from different backgrounds.
 - Ask them if they other group of young people were right to hold these stereotypes.
- 3.** Asking the group to draw what they think another group of young people would say helps create a safer environment for them to discuss stereotypes and prejudices. This is because the group are able to discuss what stereotypes and prejudices young people have without fear that they will be accused of holding them themselves. However, the group are more than likely to be drawing on their own stereotypes and prejudices to inform what they say.
- 4.** At the end of the activity, you can reveal that the other group of young people did not exist, and that describing them was a way of creating a safer space for the group to discuss their own opinions. Often groups will have forgotten about this by the end of the activity, will move into discussing their own beliefs safely.

4

Spot the Terrorist

aims

To enable the group to confront and to be challenged upon their own stereotypes and prejudices.

To actively challenge any stereotypes the group may hold.

activity time

30 – 45 minutes

materials

- Print or photocopy the eight **Spot the Terrorist Picture Cards** and eight **Spot the Terrorist Answer Cards** – cut along the dotted lines.

instructions

1. Give the group the Spot the Terrorist Picture Cards.
2. Explain that two of the pictures on the cards are of people who have been convicted of terrorist acts and ask the group to choose which two they think are most likely to be terrorists. Ask if anyone recognises the photos and knows the answer not to give it away until the end of the activity.
3. Encourage the group to discuss why they are choosing particular people;
 - is it based on a stereotype or prejudice?
 - what assumptions are they making about that person?
 - what do they think that person's appearance tells them?If necessary challenge the group to think about what that person's appearance actually tells them, rather than what they believe it tells them. This activity is impossible to complete without using stereotypes and there is no right or wrong answer.
4. Record which two people the group have chosen.
5. Give the group the Spot the Terrorist Answer Cards with the descriptions of people on.
6. Discuss the people described on the cards
 - Do the descriptions of any of the people surprise them?
 - Were they surprised about who were the actual terrorists
 - How does the truth compare to what they did in the draw a terrorist activity?
7. Discuss with the group;
 - Where do they think stereotypes come from?
 - How do they think these stereotypes will affect different groups of people. For instance what affect will these stereotypes have on young Muslim men?
 - How does this make the group feel?

Spot the Terrorist - picture card **A**



Spot the Terrorist - picture card **B**



Spot the Terrorist - picture card **C**



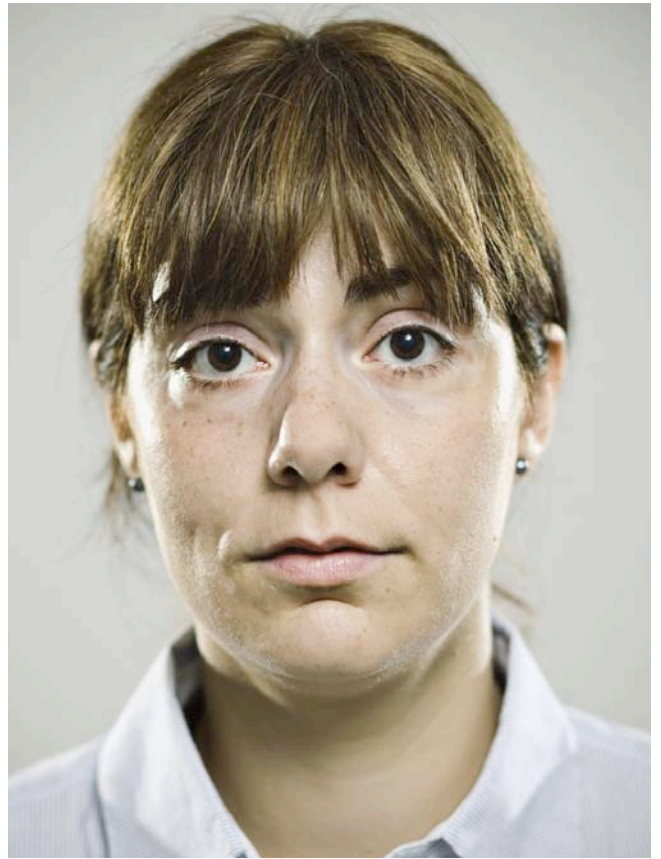
Spot the Terrorist - picture card **D**



Spot the Terrorist - picture card **E**



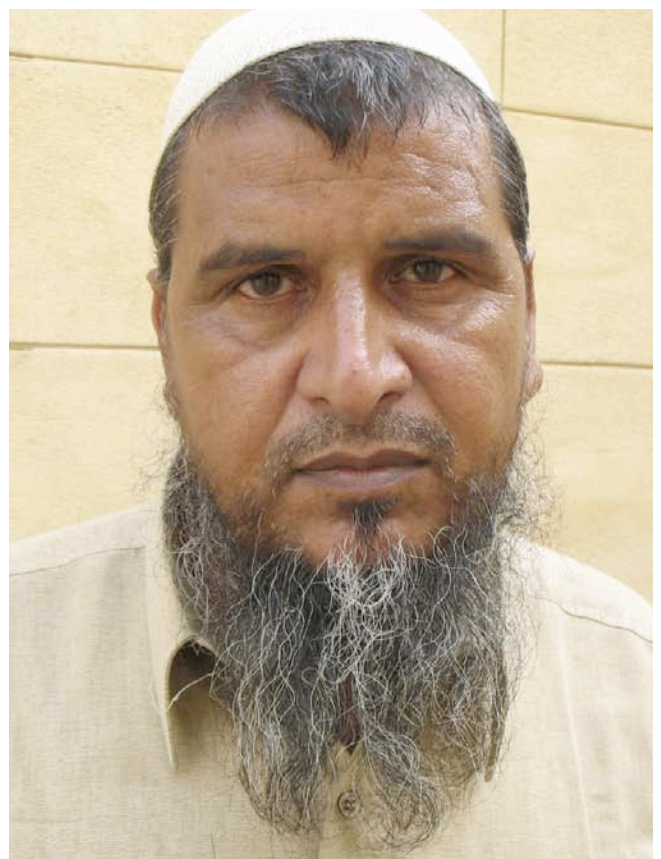
Spot the Terrorist - picture card **F**



Spot the Terrorist - picture card **G**



Spot the Terrorist - picture card **H**



This is Taher Sami

Taher Sami is 52 years old. He has three Children. He is a principal in a college.

Both of his brothers were killed in their teens by a suicide bombing in Palestine. He has no other family.

This is Steven Hine

Steven Hine is 19 years old. He is currently studying business and management in university, but is thinking of dropping out as he is struggling with finances.

This is Pat Magee and Jo Berry

“When Sir Anthony Berry MP was killed in the IRA Brighton Bombing during the 1984 Tory Party Conference, his daughter Jo was thrown into a conflict she knew very little about. Since then she has visited Ireland many times and worked with victims and former combatants from all sides. In November 2000 she met Pat Magee, the man responsible for her father’s death.”

“Pat Magee, former IRA activist, was given multiple life sentences for the Brighton Bombing. Released under the Good Friday Agreement in 1999, he has since been actively involved in peace work.”

Photo and quote:
Courtesy of The Forgiveness Project and
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This is Aisha Mohammed

(formerly named Jane Williamson)

Aisha Mohammed is 24 years old. After leaving school she went to University to study law.

At University she became interested in Islam and last year converted. Although this caused tension with her family, particularly her decision to wear the niqab, she maintains a close relationship with her parents, brother and sisters.

This is Sukhbir Mensa

Sukhbir Mensa is 21 years old. Both of his parents died in 9/11 when he was 14 years old.

He spent six months living with his aunt and uncle, but was then asked to leave as they didn't like his behaviour. He is now working in a car wash.

This is Fiona Hope

Fiona Hope is 32 years old. She is a social worker but would like a career change as she finds this job very stressful.

This is Abdul Rahman

“Abdul Rahman, the 25 year-old man who pleaded guilty to three charges under the Terrorism Act yesterday, has been sentenced to a total of six years in prison.”

“When he completes his sentence, he will be deported back to Pakistan, where he comes from.”

“Rahman was sentenced to six years for dissemination of a terrorist publication, six years for possession of an article for a purpose connected with the commission, preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism and three years for aiding and abetting contravention of the obligations of a control order.”

This is Mubashir Ahmed

Mubashir Ahmed is 43 years old. He is a qualified pharmacist and works in his local chemist. He travels to Pakistan every other summer to visit family.

He is quite religious and prays five times daily. He has one daughter who is currently studying in a faith school and one son who is currently studying law.

5

The Headline game

aims

To explore the media's role in creating stereotypes.

To explore the impact that reporting of terrorism and extremism has had on creating negative stereotypes of particular communities.

activity time

30 minutes – indefinite

materials

- You will need a variety of press articles about people from different ethnic or religious backgrounds and/or terrorism and extremism.

The following sites all have search engines which allow you to search stories they have published:

www.dailymail.co.uk

www.telegraph.co.uk

www.dailystar.co.uk

www.guardian.co.uk

www.timesonline.co.uk

www.independent.co.uk

preparation

It is important to use two or three different newspapers, as each newspaper will report from a different political perspective. Sometimes finding the same story in more than one paper will be useful to compare this.

This is an activity to explore how press reporting can create prejudice towards particular groups, for the activity to work effectively choose stories that mention religion or ethnic background.

You will need to experiment with different search terms to see what stories you can find.

You may wish to use search terms that relate solely to specific religions or ethnic groups, for example; **Islam, Muslim, Church, Mosque, Christian** or **Islamist**. This will allow you to compare and contrast the way different religions are shown in the press. Try two or three variations on the same religion, for example Church will give more results than Christian. When this activity was piloted these search terms were the most useful for discussion, particularly when the stories found also related to extremism and terrorism.

You may wish to use search terms such as; **terrorist, extremist, terror threat, extremism** or **terrorism**. This will allow you to explore the way specific terrorist or extremist incidents are reported.

You may also wish to search for terms that relate to specific groups that are associated by others with extremism for example; **BNP, Al-Queda, English Defence League, Taliban**.

Note: For most groups it will appropriate to assemble the press stories BEFORE the activity takes place, however the process of searching for the stories may also provide a learning opportunity for smaller groups.

note

A study, **Images of Islam in the UK** by Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies found that:

“Up until 2008 36% of newspaper stories about British Muslims were about Terrorism.”

“The most common nouns used in relation to British Muslims were terrorist, extremist, Islamist, suicide bomber and militant. The most common adjectives used were radical, fanatical, fundamentalist, extremist and militant.”

This is an example of how a particular ethnic or religious group, can end up with repeated negative stories connected to them.

In this case it was because there had been a number of recent terrorist or extremist acts committed, or allegedly committed, by groups who associate themselves with Islam. However these groups are not considered representative of Islam by the majority of UK Muslims, with many groups, such as the Muslim Council of Britain publicly denouncing these acts.

instructions

1. Give out all of the press articles to the group and allow them to read them. It often works well to ensure that different people have different articles, that way the group will be encouraged to share and discuss

2. Ask the group their opinion of the articles. You can use the following questions to help you do this. They do not have to be asked in order, and all do not have to be used. Try to ask questions that fit in with the discussion.

- What is the group’s overall impression of the story?
- What religions and ethnic groups are mentioned in the story?
- Does the article show the religion/ethnic group in a positive or negative way?
- Which parts of the story are facts and which parts are opinions?
- Is it necessary to mention the religion/ethnic group of the people the story is about in the article? What relevance does it have to the story?
- Does the article describe that the people in the article are not necessarily typical of other people from that religion/ethnic group?
- How could the writer have shown the religion/ethnic group in a more positive way?
- How would someone from that religion/ethnic group feel after reading this article?

3. When the discussion begins to dry up, or you run out of time, ask the group the following two questions;

- What would someone who knew nothing about that religion/ethnic group think that they were like after reading this article?
- Do they think the article could create stereotypes about that religion/ethnic group?



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supporting services for young people in the north west