

Extreme. Effective. Counselling.

A Handbook of Counselling Methods in the Field of Religiously Motivated Extremism

Kim Lisa Becker
and Tobias Meilicke

With guest
contributions from
Silke Baer
Vera Dittmar
Alexander Gasing
Annabelle Mattick
Axel Schurbohm
Harald Weilnböck

Published by the Interdisciplinary Centre for the Prevention of Radicalisation and the Promotion of Democracy and Cultures Interactive e. V. and funded by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.
This translation was funded by the Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth as part of the federal programme 'Live Democracy!'.

Published by:

Interdisciplinary Centre for the
Prevention of Radicalisation and the
Promotion of Democracy (IZRD)
Normannenstraße 1–2, 10367 Berlin, Germany
Email: info@izrde.de
Website: www.izrde.de

Cultures Interactive

– Verein zur interkulturellen Bildung und
Gewaltprävention e. V.
Mainzer Str. 11, 12053 Berlin, Germany
Email: info@cultures-interactive.de
Website: www.cultures-interactive.de

Authors:

Kim Lisa Becker
Tobias Meilicke

With guest contributions from:

Silke Baer
Dr Vera Dittmar
Alexander Gesing
Annabelle Mattick
Axel Schurbohm
Dr Harald Weilnböck

Editors:

Until 31 December 2022: Silke Baer and
Dr Harald Weilnböck

Until 31 December 2023: Kim Lisa Becker
and Tobias Meilicke

Funded by

Federal Ministry
for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

as part of the federal programme

Live Democracy!



Federal Office
for Migration
and Refugees

Free download at:

www.dist-ex.de
www.izrde.de
www.cultures-interactive.de
www.bamf.de

Berlin, Germany, 2025

Citation style:

Becker, Kim Lisa/Meilicke, Tobias (2024):
Extreme. Effective. Counselling.
– A Handbook of Counselling Methods in the
Field of Religiously Motivated Extremism
Published by the Interdisciplinary Centre for
the Prevention of Radicalisation and the
Promotion of Democracy (IZRD) and Cultures
Interactive e. V., and funded by the German
Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
(BAMF). Berlin, Germany.

Design:

www.renk.studio, Berlin, Germany

Translation:

Travod

Notes on English translation:

Unless otherwise stated, all translations of
quotations in this book are the translator's own.

In 2025, the Federal Ministry for Family
Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
(BMFSFJ) was renamed the Federal Ministry
for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ). Therefore,
the current name is used in the translation.

This translation was produced as part of:

dist[eX]

Development of a Network for
Disengagement and Exit Work

Extreme. Effective. Counselling.

**A Handbook of Counselling Methods
in the Field of Religiously Motivated
Extremism**

Kim Lisa Becker
and Tobias Meilicke

With guest
contributions from
Silke Baer
Vera Dittmar
Alexander Gesing
Annabelle Mattick
Axel Schurbohm
Harald Weilnböck

Preface	7
List of Abbreviations	11
1 Structure of the Book	12
2 Introduction to the Subject Area	15
Axel Schurbohm and Kim Lisa Becker	16
2.1 Radicalisation Prevention in Germany - History, Structures and Actors	17
2.2 Radicalisation, Extremism and Terrorism	19
2.3 Religiously Motivated Extremism, Islamism and Salafism	25
Summary	35
3 Introduction to Counselling	36
Kim Lisa Becker and Axel Schurbohm	37
3.1 Counselling and Therapy	38
3.2 The Systemic Approach	40
3.3 The Client-Centred Approach	47
3.4 The Gestalt Therapy Approach	51
3.5 Motivational Interviewing	55
3.6 The Psychodynamic Approach	59
3.7 Counselling as a Process	64
3.8 Standards in Social Environment Counselling, Distancing Counselling and Exit Counselling	67
Summary	69
4 Mindset as a Foundation	70
Silke Baer and Dr Harald Weilnböck	71
4.1 Diversity of Perspectives and Openness to the Process	76
4.2 Relationship, Confidentiality and Transparency	79
4.3 Boundaries and Confrontation	82
4.4 Closeness-Distance Balance and Entanglements	85
4.5 Sensitivity to Group Dynamics	88
4.6 Narrative-Dialogue Mindset and Unrestricted Curiosity	90
4.7 Awareness of Goal and Empathy for All Parties	92
4.8 Aims and Resources	94
4.9 Basic Psychological Knowledge	96
4.10 Youth-Orientated Perspective	99
4.11 Political Awareness and Critical Reflection	101
4.12 Cultural and Religious Sensitivity	103
4.13 Gender and Diversity	106
Summary	111
5 Preparation and Legal Framework	112
Alexander Gesing	113
5.1 Explicit Preparation	114
5.2 Implicit Knowledge	125
5.3 Legal Framework	128
Summary	137

6 Communication: Techniques and Methods	138
Tobias Meilicke and Kim Lisa Becker	139
6.1 Communication as a Model: Watzlawick's Five Principles	140
6.2 Non-Violent Communication and Mediation	144
6.3 Questioning and Communication Techniques	154
Communication Techniques	155
Active Listening and Appreciation	156
Mirroring and Reflection	157
Reframing	159
Metaphors, Stories and Images	160
Silence	162
Humour	163
Creative Writing	164
Recognising and Promoting Change Talk	165
Questioning Techniques	170
Narrative Enquiry	172
Observation and Hypothesis Questions	174
Scaling Questions	175
Circular Questions	177
Coping Questions and Exception Questions	178
Resource Questions and "What is this good for?"	179
Questions	179
Deterioration Questions and Worst-Case Questions	180
Improvement Questions, the Miracle Question and Best-Case Questions	181
Summary	185
7 Session Topics	188
Kim Lisa Becker, Tobias Meilicke and Annabelle Mattick	189
7.1 Task Clarification and Setting Goals	194
Mind Maps and Tables for Task Clarification	196
From Problem to Solution	199
The Wheel of Life	200
Head, Heart and Gut	203
7.2 Attachment and Feelings	206
The Iceberg Model	212
The Feelings Star	215
Mirroring and Offering Feelings	217
Mentalising Feelings Together	219
Working With Poetry: The Elevenie	221
Culture and Rituals	222
7.3 Promoting Resilience and Strengthening Self-Esteem	224
Positive Review	229
Resource Team	229
Safe Place	231
Consciously Confronting Uncertainty	232
Oasis of Well-Being	233
Resource Salad	234
Resources ABC	235
Promoting Resilience in Work with Children	237
Resource Book	237

	Drawing a Cartoon	238
	My Different Needs	239
7.4	Relationship Systems	243
	Genogram	245
	System/Family/Relationship Board	252
	Constellation with Representatives	260
	Sculpture Work: Visualising Feelings	266
	The Vip Map	268
	The Family Coat of Arms	272
7.5	Biographical Work	276
	River of Life	277
	Collecting Moments of Happiness	286
	Identifying the Childhood Background to Adult Problems	287
	Tidying Up and Updating the Guiding Principles	288
	Life Book	295
	Resource Balance Sheet	297
	Collages and Pictures	297
7.6	Dealing with Discrimination	299
	Power Flower	302
	Identity Molecule	305
	The Story of My Name	308
	Diversity Iceberg	310
7.7	Beliefs and Values	313
	Value Exploration	315
	Depicting Spirituality	322
	Diversity Within a Religion	323
7.8	Progress and Setbacks	326
	The Hand Formula	327
	The Progress Chart	330
	Circular Imagined Feedback	331
	Steps Towards the Goal	334
7.9	Guilt and Shame	335
	Finding Representatives	339
	The "Shame" Square: Recognition, Protection, Belonging and Integrity	342
	Growing Up with Shame and Guilt: Questions to Ask Myself	347
	Dealing with Feelings of Guilt: Reparation	348
7.10	Violence and Trauma	350
	Working with Perpetrators: An Alternative Course of Events	353
	In The Shadow of Feelings	355
	The Victim's Story	358
	Exercise for Anxiety and Panic: Five Things	359
	Breathing Exercise for Anxiety and Panic: Letting Go	360
	The Vault Exercise	361
7.11	Ambivalence and Decisions	362
	Pros and Cons List	364
	Decision Lines	369
	The Inner Team	372
	Tetralemma	376

	"Yes" Mood	380
	Anchoring a Positive Mood	382
7.12	Gender Roles	383
	Push and Pull Factors on Cards and Pictures	386
	... Because I Am a Man/Woman: Beliefs About Gender	389
	The Map of My Gender Socialisation	393
7.13	Grief and Loss	396
	The Emergency Kit	397
	Giving Shape To Feelings	399
	Haikus and Laments	400
	A Safe Place for the Deceased Person	401
	Traces of You	402
	Memory Mosaic	403
7.14	Concluding the Counselling Process	404
	Farewell Rituals	406
	The Farewell Letter	407
	The Empty Chair	408
	The Counselling Wheel	411
	The Future Collage	413
8	Peer Case Consultation	415
	Dr Vera Dittmar	416
8.1	Concept, Characteristics and Topics of Peer Case Consultation	417
8.2	Intervision as a Structured Variation of Peer (Case) Consultation	421
8.3	The Individual Steps of Intervision Presented Using a Case Study	423
8.4	Other Peer Consultation Variations	430
8.5	Special Challenges	432
	Summary	435
11	References	436
12	Templates	452
12.1	The Wheel of Life	454
12.2	The Feelings Star	455
12.3	The Faith ABC	456
12.4	The Vip Map	457
12.5	Resource Balance Sheet	458
12.6	The Power Flower	465
12.7	Pros and Cons List	466
12.8	The Counselling Wheel	467

Preface

What constitutes effective counselling? For the field of religiously motivated extremism, the answer to this question is as complex as the topic itself. High demands are made of counsellors who support relatives or professionals in dealing with (suspected) radicalised individuals or who support those who wish to distance themselves from or exit extremist groups. They need to be familiar with the subject area and be able to differentiate between important terms such as religion, Islam and Islamism, radicalisation and extremism, as well as between counselling and therapy. They are expected to be able to understand and categorise complex theological, sociological, psychological and legal matters and to communicate these to recipients of counselling in a comprehensible and memorable manner. At the same time, they need to succeed in gaining access to a target group that is often difficult to reach and be able to react critically and with understanding to problematic attitudes and socially challenging circumstances. They need to know where boundaries are and when advice regarding a referral is appropriate. In addition, it is important to focus on the person in the context of their abilities and resources within the environment in which they operate and to integrate this standard into one's own attitude. When doing so, counsellors need to constantly be examining themselves as well, and need to understand their own attitude as being under continuous development. They have to learn to see themselves as being part of the counselling process and make themselves available for this role.

It is difficult for an individual to fulfil these requirements alone. A multi-professional working environment is therefore required, in which different specialist disciplines and diverse teams with varied experiences and perspectives work together to achieve clearly defined counselling goals and client objectives. In essence, the aim is to support and empower people who are (presumed to be) threatened or affected by radicalisation and/or to support and empower their social and professional environments to prevent or interrupt the process of radicalisation by drawing on their own strengths and resources. In the case of people who are (presumed to be) threatened or affected by radicalisation, it is also necessary to support them in (re) integrating into a stable environment.

It is therefore no surprise that, over the past decade, interdisciplinary teams drawn from civil society and from public authorities have been formed and established throughout Germany. In the practical work they do, they bring together professions such as social work, (social) education, psychology and theology, but also social, political and Islamic studies and, to some extent, criminology (police). They negotiate intersections between professions and disciplines and, in some cases, have also developed new approaches. But the present-day practice of professional counselling is just as diverse as the demands made of this field of work and the individual case scenarios. This interdisciplinarity is an incredible resource. It means that

different professions and approaches work together to combat forms of group-focussed enmity, radicalisation, extremism and violence and provide professional support to those affected and those around them. At the same time, the criticism is repeatedly made that an individual counsellor is meant to be able to do everything, but cannot really do anything properly. This needs to be countered: the individual preferences of counsellors as well as contradictions between or even within different approaches require precisely that which also needs to be strengthened in the people they work with: the ability to deal with ambiguity. This refers to the ability to recognise and internalise the fact that there is no such thing as an approach to counselling which works in all cases, even though individual counsellors may adhere to one specific approach, applying it and advocating for it with conviction. Specialist knowledge, a focus and a clear personal attitude are just as helpful, important and decisive as the ability to recognise and genuinely appreciate the resources contributed by other approaches and methods. All counsellors come up against professional and personal limits at some point, as it is impossible for every counsellor to provide effective counselling to every client. These limits can often be compensated for by interdisciplinary cooperation.

This methods textbook has been developed based on the interdisciplinary counselling practice just described. It aims to make a core section of the knowledge and experience within counselling practice transparent and available to both experienced counsellors and to those new to counselling, and to highlight approaches which show promise. This should reduce concerns and contradictions with regard to the demands placed on counsellors. The book thus provides an opportunity for those new to counselling to gain an overview of this field of work, of the requirements in terms their own mindset and of the different methodological approaches. At the same time, it gives long-standing counsellors the opportunity to enhance their skills and to sharpen their focus on the resources provided by different approaches. This textbook should therefore be seen as a source of ideas. Readers can select the methods presented individually, adapt them to their work and further develop them. Depending on your own needs and preferences, you may also decide to pursue further training in a specific area. Of course, a book cannot replace sound counselling training. It can only accompany, supplement and support it.

This book therefore makes no claim to be an exhaustive or definitive treatment, as we are dealing with a complex and dynamic field of work in which ideologies and movements are constantly changing and priorities constantly shifting. This textbook contributes to making interdisciplinary counselling practice more transparent. Existing qualifications and focal points of thematic and specialised professional work in the field of religiously motivated extremism are presented, giving outsiders an insight into practical counselling work.

All of the authors and interviewees in this book are professionals who have been working and/or researching in this field for several years. Consequently, the fictitious case studies used to illustrate different dialogue and questioning techniques and methods are based on the real experiences of practitioners in the field.

We would therefore like to express our special thanks to all the interviewees and authors who have enriched this methods textbook with their knowledge, expertise and points of view: Dr Mohammed Shehata, Dr Vera Dittmar, Thomas Mücke, Harry Guta, Prof. MD Marc Alroggen, Kerstin Sischka, Annabelle Mattick, Alexander Gesing, Silke Baer and Dr habil. Harald Weilnböck.

It was also a great privilege to have an advisory board to check all content and methods appearing in the book. Special thanks are therefore also due to Michael Gerland, Talha Taskinsoy, Dr Vera Dittmar, Andrea Dänzer, Harry Guta, Kerstin Sischka, Stefanie Schmolke and Zainab Fakhir, whose expertise, experience and critical perspectives were instrumental in conceptualising and designing the content of the book, including the topics and the exercises.

Special thanks also go to Marcel Komarek and Melanie Thöne from the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. In addition to promoting the idea, the project and the textbook itself, in collaboration with the advisory board, they consistently provided supportive and enriching feedback during the planning and implementation phase.

We would also like to thank all those colleagues with whom we have been able to work together in a spirit of trust, developing professionally and learning together over the past few years – especially the entire department of radicalisation prevention at the Türkische Gemeinde in Schleswig-Holstein e. V. (registered association of the Turkish community in Schleswig-Holstein).

Our heartfelt thanks also go to all recipients of counselling who have placed their trust in us, working with us in this topic area as well as working on themselves.

Together, we will succeed at preventing and interrupting processes of radicalisation, and at supporting democracy, and we will achieve this by trusting people, approaching processes of change and reflection consciously and actively, and by providing each other with support.

Structure of the Book

This book is aimed at counsellors and therapists who deal with the topic of religiously motivated extremism, as well as all interested parties and professionals working in related fields of counselling.

It begins with an introduction (→ 2) to counselling practice in the field of religiously motivated extremism and to the relevant networks and structures throughout Germany (→ 2.1). This is primarily intended to provide an overview of the nationwide field of work and its history for those counsellors and interested professionals who are new to work in this field. Core concepts from this field of work are then presented, categorised and related to each other. It is crucial for counsellors to be able to classify and differentiate between terms such as radicalisation, extremism and terrorism (→ 2.2). The same applies to the terms religiously motivated extremism, Islamism and Salafism, so that they can be explained in an accessible manner or explored together during counselling. In particular, an interview with an experienced Islamic theologian establishes how commonly used terminology relates to Islam and provides a survey of the resources available, including theological approaches (→ 2.3).

In addition to looking at the specific topic area, an introduction is given to the format of counselling itself (→ 3). Counselling and therapy are differentiated from each other and it is made clear how counselling can be understood in contrast to or as a supplement to (psycho)therapy. There is also a focus on limits and the relevance of referral counselling (→ 3.1). By means of various counselling approaches, the connection between the area of social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling and the specific requirements and possibilities within counselling is made. Some of these approaches have already become established in practice. In many cases this is because they provide access to the target group, which is often difficult to reach, or because they are particularly promising in terms of achieving the goals of distancing people from extremism or helping them to exit it. In addition to the systemic (→ 3.2), client-centred (→ 3.3) and Gestalt-therapeutic approaches (→ 3.4), the less well-established but very promising approaches of motivational interviewing (→ 3.5) and psychodynamic counselling (→ 3.6) are also presented. Complementing this, short interviews with

BAG RelEx	German Council for Preventing Extremism
BAMF	German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
BDSG	German Federal Data Protection Act
BfV	German domestic intelligence services
BMEV	German Federal Mediation Association
BMBFSFJ	German Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
BMI	German Federal Ministry of the Interior
BpB	German Federal Agency for Civic Education
CCAIL	German Code of Crimes against International Law
DGfB	German Association for Counseling
GDPR	EU General Data Protection Regulation
GFE	Group-focussed enmity
GG	German Basic Law
IS	Islamic State
NVC	Non-violent communication
SGB	German Social Code
UN	United Nations
VPN	Violence Prevention Network

practitioners as exemplary representatives of these approaches can be found at the end of the sub-chapters, in which the various potentials and limitations are highlighted in each case. Furthermore, examples are given to explain why experiences with the approach in question and its appropriateness for each specific case make it particularly valuable for work in the field of religiously motivated extremism. Finally, the process of counselling is presented in the form of typical, consecutive phases, with descriptions of their respective special features (→ 3.7). The standards for counselling in this area which have already been developed in practice are also explained (→ 3.8).

Effective counselling also requires practitioners to internalise and continuously develop a thoughtful attitude. This is a prerequisite for entering into and maintaining a successful and trusting working relationship with those receiving counselling. Individual core competences within the mindset are therefore presented in Chapter 4 and supplemented by questions which counsellors can use to reflect upon themselves.

Chapter 5 then focusses on preparation and the legal context of counselling. Regarding explicit preparation, an explanation is given of the different target groups, settings and corresponding approaches and assignments counsellors may encounter in different scenarios and what needs to be considered and taken into account (→ 5.1). With respect to implicit knowledge, possible role perceptions and power relations are also examined, as these also need to be considered when preparing for or reflecting upon a counselling session (→ 5.2). Key elements of the legal framework that counsellors should be aware of and able to explain transparently to clients are also presented and outlined – these include the right to freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of education, the duty of confidentiality, regulations on data protection and the (mandatory) disclosure of data as well as the absence of a right to refuse to testify (→ 5.3).

Based on the counsellor's mindset and preparation, Chapter 6 focusses on methodological approaches and communication techniques within counselling. In addition to an insight into helpful basic knowledge regarding communication as presented by Watzlawick (→ 6.1) and approaches to nonviolent communication and mediation (→ 6.2), a range of different conversational and interviewing techniques are presented and explained by means of examples which counsellors can internalise and make use of in this field of work (→ 6.3).

The heart of the textbook consists of the topics of social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling, which are presented in the following chapter (→ 7). By means of different challenges and topics, counsellors are presented with suggestions and example explanations regarding various specific exercises and methods which they can use in their work in the field of religiously motivated extremism. The exercises and methods are based on the approaches presented earlier on in the book. They can be understood as a

stimulus, a range of options and a source of ideas and can also be combined with work which the practitioner already knows and is familiar with, encouraging new ideas and perspectives and being individually adapted or in some cases rejected. Not all topics, methods and exercises are equally suitable for every counsellor and/or client. It is therefore a matter of using constructive methods to provide clarification and support our work when it is appropriate and helpful – but never simply for the sake of using the method itself. The topics covered are diverse. The main objectives and topics are presented both in order to clarify the assignment (→ 7.1) and in order to deal with the topic of attachment and feelings (→ 7.2). Important topics such as promoting resilience and strengthening self-esteem (→ 7.3) or working on relationship systems (→ 7.4) are also highlighted. This is supplemented by sections on biographical work (→ 7.5), dealing with discrimination in counselling (→ 7.6) and explicit work on the topic of beliefs and values (→ 7.7). These sections are followed by discussions about achieving progress and dealing with setbacks within counselling (→ 7.8), working on the topic of guilt and shame (→ 7.9) and violence and trauma (→ 7.10). A section on methodical approaches to ambivalence and help in making decisions (→ 7.11) is supplemented by another on reflecting on gender roles in this particular area (→ 7.12). In addition, ideas are presented regarding how counsellors can approach the topic of grief and loss (→ 7.13). Finally, methods which can be used to conclude counselling processes together with clients are presented (→ 7.14).

The concluding chapter, Chapter 8, presents and makes the case for implementing peer case consultation. To provide inspiration, the concept, characteristics and topics of this technique are outlined (→ 8.1) and intervention, a method which counsellors can use within their teams, is presented by means of a specific example (→ 8.2, 8.3). For further inspiration, additional variations (→ 8.4) and particular challenges (→ 8.5) associated with peer case consultation in the subject area and field of work focussed on here are also discussed.

All major chapters (with the exception of the session topics) end with short summaries, with the key elements and conclusions regarding the individual topics and chapters also being presented in an overview. At numerous points, readers are given concrete opportunities to internalise and reflect on their own knowledge, mindset and methodological work and, with the help of specific case studies, to learn to visualise the practicalities of dealing with different target groups and topics, as well as suggestions for how to do so.

Introduction to the Subject Area

Axel Schurbohm and Kim Lisa Becker

The professional basis of work in social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling in the area of religiously motivated extremism can be divided into two areas. Firstly, an overview of the prevention landscape in Germany is needed (→ 2.1). Secondly, basic knowledge of radicalisation processes (→ 2.2) and the topic of religiously motivated extremism (→ 2.3) is useful. The presentation of both basic areas is intended to help counsellors in the field to become aware of nationwide networks and to benefit from them for their own work and further training. In addition, insight is provided into the key concepts that characterise the field of work, contextualising them in relation to each other so that something of a shared language and mindset can be developed.

Radicalisation Prevention in Germany – History, Structures and Actors

The Islamist attacks of 11 September 2001 brought a new threat to the attention of the public. In Germany too, where some of the perpetrators of the World Trade Center attack lived for several years, the public and political debate on the topics of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism underwent a lasting change (cf. BAG RelEx 2019: 10). For the first few years, the issue was still viewed from the perspective of (public) security and was primarily dealt with by means of foreign and domestic security policy.

This approach then changed and, certainly by the time of the rise of Islamic State (IS) and the first departures of young Europeans to the crisis regions in Syria and Iraq, it was supplemented with preventative programmes. The first advice centres, which provided appropriate services for those in the immediate social environment of individuals who were becoming radicalised, i.e. family, friends, teachers and educational professionals etc., were set up by civil society and state agencies from 2012 onwards at the request of the government. Islamist-motivated travel to war zones, which already occurred before the appearance of Islamic State (IS), had previously been the sole responsibility of the security authorities. By working with people's social environments, civil society actors intended to strengthen the remaining contacts which largely radicalised young people had, thus enabling them to turn away from extremist groups and their ideologies (cf. BAG RelEx 2017: 10; cf. Kiefer 2021: 29).

With the increased influx of young people into Islamist and Salafist organisations in the subsequent period, as well as the further increase in the numbers of people travelling abroad to join IS (cf. BMI 2022: 185), opportunities to engage with social environment work, distancing work and exit work were also further expanded and strengthened. One of the main catalysts for the increased influx can be seen in the growth of anti-Muslim attitudes in Germany, which has resulted in a reciprocal process,

especially following the attacks of 9/11. Islamist and Salafist movements in particular made use of the victim narrative in order to generate support for their own movement.

In addition, in 2012 the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) established the Advice Centre on Radicalisation, which has since then been receiving enquiries from relatives, friends and professionals about possible Islamist radicalisation nationwide and forwarding them to affiliated advice centres throughout Germany (cf. BAMF 2016: 2f.; cf. Hamm 2021: 24). Appropriate structures for the prevention of religiously motivated extremism have now been established in every federal state. There are now some 50 civil society projects in the field of social environment work, distancing work and exit work across Germany. These include the 14 advice centres of the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees network, 16 services within the criminal justice context and more than 20 guidance centres in North Rhine-Westphalia¹ alone. In addition, in some federal states, actors drawn from the security authorities have taken on the task of social environment work, distancing work and exit work, supplementing or replacing civil society programmes. They are usually based in the domestic intelligence services of the federal states in question (cf. Meilicke/Schurbohm 2023; Freiheit et al. 2023: 50f.); in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, the state criminal police offices (LKA) also have this responsibility.

The civil society self-organisation has also developed significantly since the first advice centres were set up. The German Council for Preventing Extremism (BAG RelEx)² was founded in 2016 on the initiative of civil society as an umbrella organisation whose tasks are to promote networking, the exchange of expertise and the further development of work in this field. Its members have now grown to 35 organisations and it brings together experts from all areas of preventative work against religiously motivated extremism. In addition, the Kompetenznetzwerk Islamistischer Extremismus (the Islamic Extremism Specialist Network) was founded in 2020 to further promote development in this area and the transfer of knowledge (cf. BAG RelEx 2022). Nevertheless, compared to other areas of extremism prevention, such as right-wing extremism, the prevention and intervention of religiously motivated extremism is still a very undeveloped field of work in which, despite the good work of individual actors and their collaborations, there are still opportunities for further development.

Since the initial development of civil society services, various programmes have been set up at the federal level to provide financial support for the work carried out by these organisations. The "Demokratie leben!" ("Live Democracy!") programme of the Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ), which has been running since 2015, ought to be mentioned at this point. It includes both civil society structures, partnerships for democracy (municipal level) and the state democracy centres (state level) as well as

¹Data correct as at:
February 2023.
²<https://www.bag-relex.de/>

the establishment of specialist networks and centres for the relevant areas of focus (federal level). The programme also funds innovative projects for the development of new and creative project ideas, similar to the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI) via the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (cf. BMBFSFJ 2025). Another programme was the BMI's Nationales Präventionsprogramm gegen islamistischen Extremismus (National Prevention Programme against Islamist Extremism), which expired at the end of 2021 (cf. BMI 2022).

The German Federal Government, in its strategy for preventing extremism and promoting democracy, described its work in these areas as a cross-cutting challenge. It is one which must be tackled jointly by the federal, state and local governments with the involvement of civil society, security agencies, authorities, schools, clubs, associations and other governmental and non-governmental organisations (cf. Bundesregierung 2016: 13). This results in overlaps, exchange and cooperation in various areas of prevention work, which also repeatedly highlights challenges in determining professional boundaries and responsibilities in practical work (cf. Jasch 2021: 35).

Radicalisation, Extremism and Terrorism

In addition to knowledge regarding the development and structures of Islamism prevention in Germany and the differentiation between religiously motivated extremism, Islamism and Salafism, knowledge of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism is also required in order to be able to work in social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling in the context of religiously motivated extremism. This is crucial, not least because there are differences and overlaps in the characterisation of the phenomenon, as well as in the definitions of terms which are fundamental to work in this area. In counselling work in particular, it is essential to have an understanding of radicalisation processes in order to provide clients with appropriate support. This permits the clarification of the following points: where, if applicable, is the client within the process of radicalisation? What interventions are likely to be supportive in this phase?

Because the terms radicalisation, extremism and terrorism are often used synonymously in public discourse, media reporting and in the academic and prevention landscape, the term radicalisation is criticised in both social and academic debate. One of the criticisms made is that it marks out unpopular positions and supposedly delegitimises them, or seeks to legitimise the position of the speaker (cf. Abay Gaspar et al. 2019: 16). In addition, there is neither agreement on what characterises the process of radicalisation nor a generally accepted definition, despite the fact that a considerable amount of money has been invested worldwide in research into radicalisation and possible influencing factors since the attacks of 9/11. By and large, however, it is clear that radicalisation is a process (cf. Ostwaldt/Coquelin 2018: 11). Nonetheless, there is disagreement as to how this process takes place, whether it should be thought of in terms of stages, as a continuum or as a conveyor belt. Opinion in academia is divided over whether this process inevitably ends in violence or whether violence is the logical conclusion (cf. Aslan et al. 2018: 19). It is crucial for counsellors to be able to place violence in the context of group-focussed enmity and radicalisation processes, and to be aware of this connection.



Group-focussed enmity and violence

The term “group-focussed enmity” (GFE) refers to “derogatory and marginalising attitudes towards people based on their assigned membership of a social group” (Küpper/Zick 2015). These attitudes are often connected to each other (for details see Mokros/Pangritz 2021: 27f.). Processes of radicalisation in the context of religiously motivated extremism are usually accompanied by people who are considered different or non-believers being seen not only as alien or “strange” but also as inferior, and rules of conduct and action are derived from this (e.g. no contact with “non-believers”, or the supposedly legitimate use of violence against people designated as being part of that group). Conversely, people who are threatened or affected by radicalisation can also be affected by different dimensions of GFE themselves and also have corresponding experiences of (anti-Muslim) racism and exclusion.

Violence refers to the use of physical or psychological coercion against people and living beings as well as against physical objects. The aim is to harm the other person, to impose one's own will or needs, or to react to the violence of others in order to protect oneself (cf. Schubert/Klein 2018: 149) (→ 7.10). In the area of extremism, in many cases all of these objectives are combined in the exercise of violence.

For example, extremists justify terrorist attacks by saying that they had to defend themselves against a certain political system that threatened them (protection). At the same time, they often clearly state the goal of wanting to bring about a different political system, e.g. a caliphate³ (imposing their own will). According to the supposed legitimisation, this justifies damage to people, objects or buildings.

Addressing radicalisation and GFE with clients can help to break through radicalisation processes and encourage critical questions to be asked. For relatives and professionals, it can make the structural conditions and factors underlying radicalisation processes, as well as individual motivations, more transparent, and it can thus promote awareness regarding approaches and solutions. It can be helpful for index clients⁴ to understand what they were or are looking for in a radical ideology or social context and to highlight contradictions which encourage a *cognitive opening-up* and questioning of things – for example, when clients reflect on how hostile attitudes that they themselves have experienced are now represented in themselves in a different form. Radicalisation models (cf. Wiedl 2021 for details) can also be incorporated into counselling practice. They are particularly helpful and beneficial when they take into account the processual nature and non-linearity of radicalisation, “exclude monocausal connections and focus on multifactorial orientation processes” (Ostwaldt/Coquelin 2018: 11).

However, what is considered extremist or radical always depends on what is considered “normal”, what is considered the legal and moral consensus in a particular legal and national framework (society) at a particular point in time. So what is considered “normal” today may be radical tomorrow and vice versa. Temporal as well as geographical and socially constructed framings are therefore necessary conditions for judging what is radical and what is not (cf. Neumann 2017a: 47f.). Furthermore, radicalism should not be seen as negative per se (cf. Abay Gaspar et al. 2018: 7f.). The history of the Federal Republic of Germany alone provides a multitude of examples which demonstrate the positive effect – from the present-day perspective – of positions which were once perceived as radical on the willingness of societies to change. Women who vehemently stood up for their rights in the 1960s were labelled as radical at the time, as well as in the years which followed. Nevertheless, even if the goal of equality has not been achieved, there are probably only exceptional cases where anyone would seriously question the idea that it is a goal worth pursuing.

The disagreement regarding the process and possible influencing factors shows that radicalisation cannot be explained by one model possessing universal validity. The interaction of different factors must always be considered on a case-by-case basis. Radicalisation is a multifactorial process which unfolds in

³ The term “caliphate” describes a theocratic, Islamic form of government in which secular and spiritual leadership are united in one person.
⁴ Within systemic counselling, the index client is understood to be the symptom carrier in the system. In the context of religiously motivated extremism, the person in question is the (presumed) radicalised person.

many different ways on the individual, interpersonal and societal levels (cf. Biene/Junk 2017: 120). Abay Gaspar et al. (2019: 20) describe “radicalisation as the intensifying questioning of the legitimacy of a normative order and/or increasing readiness to fight the institutional structure of such an order”. Factors which can influence this process are multifaceted and interwoven with each other. Critical life events that have an overwhelming effect during a certain phase of life, the search for meaning, order or structure in life or the experience of being affected by discrimination and marginalisation can both contribute to turning people towards a radical or extremist ideology or social environment (push factors) and serve to attract people (pull factors) (cf. Zick/Böckler 2015: 10). Push factors which can make people more susceptible to extremist narratives and drive them into the circles of extremist groups include the perceived or actual exclusion of individuals or (constructed) groups from social coexistence and social disadvantage on the labour and housing markets or in educational institutions. Pull factors, on the other hand, are strategies used by extremist groups which increase their appeal to individuals who are undergoing radicalisation. Tapping into the desire for belonging and community, the promise of serving a higher purpose or adventure in the form of the fight against injustice are just a few examples of how extremist actors try to attract their target groups. In these ways, they seek to use their stories to suggest or offer a supposed solution to the problems of their target groups that result from the push factors (cf. Ebner 2018). Push and pull factors are therefore directly related and interact with each other.



Discrimination and racism in the context of radicalisation

Disadvantages which relate to ascribed social or physical characteristics are referred to as discrimination (cf. Scherr 2010: 38). Discrimination is intended to regulate belonging and show who is considered a legitimate member in a social context, especially in a nation-state framework, and what position they are entitled to. Discrimination is thus a part of the struggle for status (cf. Scherr 2016: 12). It represents a practice of differentiation which is based on socially influential assumptions of normality and patterns of values and which has social consequences (cf. Scherr 2010: 46).

Racism is a form of discrimination based on constructed groups (cf. Rommelspacher 2011: 29). These groups are ascribed a uniform and unchanging nature (homogenisation), while their differences and incompatibilities with the majority

society are emphasised (polarisation) and ranked (hierarchisation) (cf. Rommelspacher 2002: 132). In doing so, the aim is not to justify disadvantages and discrimination solely on the basis of external characteristics (e.g. skin colour). Sometimes membership of a religious community, for example, is also used as a possible explanatory approach and as a means of differentiation (cf. Dahinden et al. 2011: 226). In this context, the term anti-Muslim racism may be used. Anti-Muslim racism can occur both on a structural or institutional level and on an individual level. Such an understanding of racism is important, because it allows counsellors to understand this phenomenon as having a powerful effect at a societal level and to relate this force to the effects it has in each individual case. Recognising the associated distress and feelings of powerlessness and categorising the different attitudes and actions which may be associated with them is a key component of the field of work described here. The experiences of racism and discrimination young people have within a society can ultimately also act as a significant push factor in the course of radicalisation and be reinterpreted as pull factors by extremist actors in their narratives of equality and justice in the fight against oppressive structures.

Abay Gaspar et al. (2019) argue in favour of a broad understanding of radicalisation which, in their view, offers the possibility of capturing all the phenomena of radicalisation whilst allowing a nuanced view of the different areas involved. The understanding these authors have developed also highlights the processual nature of radicalisation (cf. Abay Gaspar et al. 2019: 16ff.) and makes it possible to grasp the overall meaning of radicalisation. In this way, it is not merely understood as a threat, but is also seen from a positive perspective, one which is directed towards social change, names grievances, addresses them and promotes the good of society as a whole, without using violence in any form. However, processes of radicalisation can also lead to extremism. In short: not every radicalisation process leads to extremism, but all forms of extremism are usually preceded by radicalisation. This is not necessarily something which is firmly anchored ideologically in advance. This nuanced, positive and process-based approach to radicalisation differs from the rigid and negative concept of extremism. It can enable counsellors to have better conversations with clients about possibilities for change. It is not uncommon for the latter to state that the main reason for their radicalisation is the desire to fight for the abolition of social grievances such as (anti-Muslim) racism. If this desirable political goal is recognised by counsellors, there are often opportunities to develop it in ways which do not involve

the use of violence. It is not uncommon for a cognitive opening-up to occur when clients realise that the norm of supposed equality and justice set by the extremist group only relates to their own group, in turn creating clear images of an enemy when it comes to the outside world. These and other contradictions need to be addressed and made visible in order to encourage clients to ask critical questions and thereby support distancing and deradicalisation. In addition, such a nuanced approach to different processes of radicalisation opens up the possibility of developing appropriate prevention strategies in the primary, secondary and tertiary areas (cf. Abay Gaspar et al. 2018: 18).

The matter of whether and when someone in the process of radicalisation is to be considered an extremist is also disputed. Is the boundary only crossed with the use of violence or can we also speak of extremism before this point? If violence does occur, this transition can have various causes. On the one hand, it can result from the reinforcement of the individual's own views. On the other, exhausting non-violent means without experiencing success can also be the reason for the supposed legitimisation of violence. In addition, repression by the targeted political structures and the state are possible factors that can be seen as justifying the group's recourse to violent means (cf. Abay Gaspar et al. 2019: 25).

From a constitutional point of view, extremism stands outside the prevailing political system. According to the extremist, the existing system is to be overpowered at all costs, including through the use of violence. It is characterised across all phenomena by an anti-pluralist viewpoint which opposes difference and deviation, provides supporters with simple black-and-white/friend-or-foe schemas and claims interpretative sovereignty with regard to the ideology in question. In contrast to radicalism, within extremism, violence is always seen as a legitimate means of enforcing one's own ideas. Extremism is directed against diversity and self-determination; it seeks confrontation with political opponents rather than conflict resolution (cf. Böttcher 2017: 337ff.).

Terrorism is a special form of extremism. It can be distinguished from other forms of extremism in that the acts of violence planned and committed are part of an overall strategy. They are usually planned long in advance and inevitably intended to harm people (cf. Neumann 2017a: 45f.). Violence is part of a master plan (e.g. to achieve political goals). It is stringently organised and not only takes the killing of people into consideration, but is explicitly aimed at achieving the highest possible number of victims. Although different forms of terrorism can be distinguished from one another, it is ultimately also a communication strategy. It is intended to convey the political convictions and the ruthlessness of those who use terrorist tactics to society and thus create fear and insecurity (cf. Neumann 2017b: 27).

The transition from radicalism to extremism or even

terrorism is particularly relevant for those within the security authorities due to its legal significance and consequences. The transition thresholds mark the points at which they can, and must, intervene legally. However, the transitions and specific combinations of factors which may be present also create legal obligations with which counsellors must comply (→ 5.3).



Counsellors' reporting obligations in the context of extremism and violence

Under Section 138 (1) of the German Criminal Code (covering such offences as murder or robbery/extortion with the use of force or the threat of force), counsellors must immediately inform the criminal prosecution authorities if they learn of the planning of a criminal offence within the context of their counselling work. The same applies to offences under Section 89a (preparation of a serious violent offence endangering the state), Section 129a (formation of a terrorist organisation) and Section 129b (foreign criminal and terrorist organisations) of the German Criminal Code, which are relevant in the context of exit and distancing work.

Religiously Motivated Extremism, Islamism and Salafism

We use the term religiously motivated extremism when a movement or a religiously fuelled ideology is used as a framework for the supposed legitimisation of extremist actions. The religion which feeds the ideology is initially of minimal importance. The concept of religiously motivated extremism should therefore not be understood as implying a religious basis as such, but rather

as denoting that its adherents regard it as having a religious basis. For counsellors, this distinction is important in order to allow clients to be open to religion, to explore their own religious interests and to use religion as a potential resource (or not), even as counsellors themselves have their own experiences, beliefs and attitudes when it comes to the subject of religion (→ 4.12).



Religion versus ideology

At the heart of religion is the belief in a higher power, one which stands above the believers of the religion in question. It is a belief in a god or something divine which is fundamentally different from humans. Religion offers believers a frame of reference for understanding the world and life. It usually provides rules, commandments and desired behaviours which structure religious life. Depending on the nature of their faith, believers organise their lives according to this framework and accompanying convictions, expressing their religious experience through various ceremonial and ritual acts (e.g. church services, prayers, meditation) (cf. Schneider/Toyka-Seid 2023).

Ideologies, on the other hand, consist of a specific combination of interests and intentions. They are expressed through a specific way of thinking and the prioritisation of values and norms. Over the course of history, different manifestations and interpretations in these areas have led to the development of a wide variety of ideologies, each of which reflects its own ideas regarding the meaning and purpose of life. In a political context, they serve to motivate and justify actions and are thus an essential component of any political orientation. The desire for concrete social and political realisation is inherent to ideologies. As a rule, they exclusively benefit the goals of the supporters of the ideology in question and not the common good (cf. Schneider/Toyka-Seid 2023).

Even if ideology has an explicitly political component in addition to religion, and one which in this field of work often goes hand in hand with a devaluation and rejection of those who think differently and of democratic systems, in counselling it is first and foremost the clients who define for themselves what they consider to be religion. Developing a critical view of ideological content which is problematic for coexistence and, if appropriate, a new personal understanding of religion is often a key focus within distancing counselling and exit counselling.

In recent years, Islamism has been the dominant form of religious extremism in Germany. As a result of the attacks in

New York on 11 September 2001, Madrid in 2004, London in 2005, Paris in 2015, Nice in 2016 and on Berlin's Breitscheidplatz in December of the same year, it is dominant in terms of both its manifestation and public, political and media perception compared with other forms of religious extremism.

There are various definitions of the term Islamism within academia and practice-orientated approaches. However, some core features can be summarised:

- Positioning Islam as the absolute standard for ordering life and the state
- The sovereignty of God rather than the sovereignty of the people as a basis for legitimisation
- Total penetration of society and control over it
- A homogeneous and identitarian social order in the name of Islam
- Opposition to the democratic constitutional state
- Fanaticism and the willingness to use violence as dangerous potential tendencies (cf. Pfahl-Traugher 2011).

In their 2020 report, the German domestic intelligence services (BfV) describe Islamism as follows: its supporters seek to achieve the partial or complete abolition of the fundamental principles of freedom and democracy in Germany. From the point of view of Islamists, Islam, or their interpretation of Islam, not only regulates personal and purely private matters, but also provides a legal and political framework for coexistence within society. According to their beliefs, theirs is a religion which includes a divinely ordained ordering of things. Secular laws and forms of government developed by man are therefore to be rejected, as this is a task of God, who has anchored his order in Islam. Islamists therefore reject the separation of church and state (cf. BMI 2022: 176). Seidensticker (2016: 9) elaborates: "Islamism is an endeavour to reshape society, culture, the state and politics on the basis of values and norms which are regarded as Islamic." The term "endeavour" can also be used to describe activities in the areas of education and missionary work. These play a role in various forms in different currents of Islamism (cf. *ibid.*). While some groups seek to force the introduction of a change in the political system through violence and overthrow, other actors focus their efforts on expanding their influence on the political system over the long term through the sheer number of their supporters. Seidensticker emphasises the fact that Islamism ignores large parts of Islamic history or distances itself from it,

as Islamists believe that the unfortunate situation of Muslims in the world results from their distance from the "true" faith (2016: 10). Riexinger (2007), on the other hand, describes Islamism as a theory of governance which emerged in the early 20th century in the encounter with the worldviews of Western societies and Western occupiers in the Middle East. Such background knowledge is certainly valuable, as having an overview of historical origins and the historical context can be an advantage for counsellors in order to better classify clients' statements and attitudes (regarding the history of Islam, see for example Krämer 2005).

Salafism largely represents different currents within Islamism. These often have more differences than similarities and therefore cannot be regarded as a homogeneous group (cf. Wiedl 2014: 414ff. for details). In terms of its development, Salafism should be understood as a modern phenomenon that has its origins in the early twentieth century and relates to pre-modern Islam, despite the fact that there was no group or current that was labelled as Salafiya or which referred to itself as such during this phase (cf. Nedza 2014 for more details). Key names in the spread of the term Salafism are Gamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammaad Abduh and Rashid Rida. The reformists assumed that the Islamic world would be able to overcome its crisis if it returned to the roots of true Islam. In this way, they could get back on the right path, which had been abandoned due to external influences and colonial rule.

In their beliefs, Salafists refer to the "pious predecessors" (Arabic: as-Salaf as-Ṣāliḥ), the first three generations after the Prophet Muhammad, whom they believe still lived the pure, true form of Islam. According to Salafist ideology, this was followed by a dilution of faith and a turning away of Muslims from the right path (cf. Seidensticker 2016: 24f.). Due to the dilution of the faith, Salafists reject any innovations or contextualisations of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (tradition of the Prophet) (cf. Logvinov 2017: 11ff.). They see themselves as the religious elite which must liberate Islam and the Islamic world from its suffering and categorise not only people of other faiths as infidels (Christians, Jews, Buddhists, etc.) but also Muslims from other traditions, if they do not conform with the Salafists' ideas of the supposedly true form of Islam (cf. Wiedl 2014: 412). However, Salafists differ in their choice of means for achieving their goals. Wiktorowicz (2006) distinguishes between purist, political and jihadist/militant Salafists (see Fig. 1). This distinction still characterises the way the security services understand Salafism today.

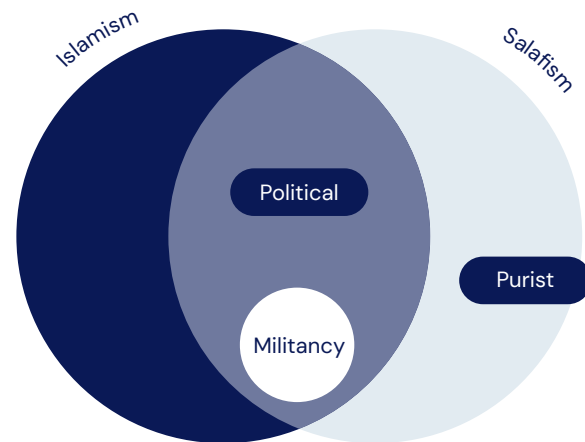


Fig. 1: Islamism and Salafism

i

Purist, political and jihadist/militant Salafism

Purists only practise the strict rules of their faith in their private lives. They display no desire to actively reshape the political system or society according to their own ideas. They are not recorded in the reports of the German domestic intelligence services and nor are they monitored by them, as the practice of their faith is protected by freedom of belief in accordance with Art. 4 German Basic Law (→ 5.3).

In contrast to the purists, political Salafists are involved both within the political system and outside it, publicly promoting change in political and social life in accordance with their ideas. Political Salafists can be further divided into those who reject violence and those who legitimise it. Even if they themselves do not use violence to bring their ideas about, they are monitored by the German domestic intelligence services due to their political activities and their open stance against the fundamental principles of freedom and democracy. In the intelligence reports of both the Federal Government and the federal states, they appear in the statistics and are listed as members of organisations.

Jihadist or militant Salafists, who are also monitored by the security authorities, are by far the smallest but probably the most significant and most widely recognised group of Salafists in Germany. They are ready and willing to use violence against political opponents and against the political system in order to achieve their political and religious goals. In doing so, they focus on the establishment of an

Islamic state that is organised according to their ideas of what they see as real Islam (cf. BMI 2022: 177; Jokisch 2014: 20).

Figures from the German domestic intelligence services on potential Islamist individuals⁵ only include individuals categorised as political or jihadist/militant. The political and jihadist/militant Salafists are also included here. In their 2021 report, the German domestic intelligence services report a total of 28,290 people as being on the Islamist spectrum. Since 2013, the largest group within this total is considered to be the (political and jihadist/militant) Salafists. According to the German domestic intelligence services, in 2021 the potential number of individuals was around 11,900 (cf. BMI 2022: 181). Organisations which are active in Germany and which are monitored by the German domestic intelligence services include parts of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut Tahrir, Turkish Hezbollah and the Furkan Movement (cf. BMI 2022: 181).

This categorisation is an idealised subdivision of extremely heterogeneous movements, some of which are also in strong competition with each other. The transitions between the three categories are fluid, and individual attitudes and positions can undergo dynamic changes. In practice, the categories can provide some orientation, but they often play a somewhat subordinate role in the consideration of each individual case. Furthermore, it is possible that, within the practice of social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling, special challenges may also arise with respect to clients from the purist spectrum or when counselling their social environment. Such individuals are only of secondary relevance to the security authorities and are not recorded in the reports of the German domestic intelligence services. Conflicts arise here more frequently in the context of rigorously religious or fundamentalist beliefs and a social environment which does not share them. In particular, possible confrontations in nursery schools or schools should be considered. This could, for example, be due to educators, teachers and parents having differing ideas regarding education (cf. Becker/Meilicke 2019a; 2019b). In these cases, a delicate and sensitive approach is required, as well as the experience of the experts from the counselling centres for the prevention of Islamism. This will permit the matter to be dealt with in a religiously sensitive and nuanced manner.

⁵ In Germany, figures on supporters of Islamist or Salafist movements are only collected and analysed by the German domestic intelligence services. This is partly due to the fact that it is difficult to generate solid data, as religious or political attitudes can only be measured with considerable effort, partly because Salafism is not associated with memberships and partly because the movement has a decentralised character (cf. Biene et al. 2017: 8).

Short interview with Dr Mohamed Shehata, Muslim chaplain, Al-Azhar University Cairo and Türkische Gemeinde in Schleswig-Holstein e. V. (registered association of the Turkish community in Schleswig-Holstein)

How do you define the terms Islamism and Salafism?

Dr Mohamed Shehata: Islamism is a political movement which seeks to rule the states in which it is present and thereby to reshape society, among other things. It sees Islam as the solution to all kinds of problems and seeks to reform this religion to create solutions to present-day problems. Under the motto "Islam is the solution" (al-islam huwa al-hall), Islamism is attempting to establish Islam as a political ideology and a guiding principle. Islamism is a diverse ideology which ranges from moderate to radical and proposes various means for achieving its goals.

Salafism, on the other hand, is a current of Sunni Islam which seeks to free the interpretation of the religion of Islam from inauthentic influences and which sees the exact imitation of the first three Muslim generations as the solution to the misery in which the Islamic world allegedly finds itself. Salafism also unites different currents, which differ considerably from one another in terms of the means they use and the society they envisage. Some Salafists use violence to achieve their goals, while others isolate themselves from society. It should also be noted that there is a political current within Salafism which rejects violence.

Salafist ideology has had a great impact on the collapse of the Islamic world. This is due to the rigour of its

scholars in freezing the spirit of Muslim humanity. It is also used as a political tool by rulers to control populations by force.

My criticism of these terms is that they are often used in a generalised way and can therefore promote stereotypical ideas and prejudices against Muslims and Islam as a whole. It is important to recognise the diversity within Islam and Muslim communities and to adopt a nuanced view so that prejudice and radicalisation can be counteracted.

What historical precursors and explanations do you see for the phenomenon of Islamism?

Dr Mohamed Shehata: The phenomenon of Islamism has several historical antecedents and explanations that can be found both in the history of Islam and in the modern history of the Islamic world. One important historical precursor of Islamism was the development of Wahhabism, a fundamentalist movement within Islam which emerged on the Arabian Peninsula in the 18th century. The Wahhabi movement demanded a return to the original Islam and rejected any form of innovation or interpretation. This ideology later influenced Salafism and had a significant impact on the development of Islamism in the 20th century.

In the 1920s and 1930s in Egypt and other Arab countries, Islamist groups emerged which opposed the secular, nationalist regimes and Western

influences. These groups emphasised the importance of an Islamic state and the establishment of a legal order based on Sharia law. Islamism took a new turn in the 1960s when it became associated with education and the emergence of new social movements. Islamist groups became involved in the formation of political parties, trade unions and social movements. These groups emphasised the need for an Islamic state and the establishment of Sharia law as a legal basis.

Today, there are a large number of Islamist movements and groups, all with their own goals and ideologies. Some groups emphasise jihad as a means for achieving their goals. However, these groups only understand jihad as being military struggle. From a theological point of view, the term jihad is actually only the personal endeavour of each individual and cannot be equated with violence. Other groups favour peaceful political participation and adherence to democratic principles, but invoke values which are to some extent Islamic in their politics. Overall, it can be stated that Islamism is a complex phenomenon which has been formed by various historical, political, social and religious factors.

How influential are these terms for your work?

Dr Mohamed Shehata: The terms Salafism and Islamism can play a role in my work, as they are often discussed in the Muslim community and in wider society. As a Muslim prison chaplain and Islamic theologian, it is important to understand how different forms of Islamism and Salafism can influence the religious beliefs of inmates and how to help inmates develop an appropriate understanding of Islam and its relationship to politics. Muslim counselling is primarily about helping believers to develop a deep understanding of Islam and to promote their spiritual and emotional health. In order to create a positive and supportive

environment, it is also important to maintain an open and respectful attitude towards different Muslim traditions and interpretations and to avoid stereotypes and prejudices.

As an Islamic theologian, it is crucial for me to develop a nuanced understanding of Islam and its relationship to politics. For me, it is important to emphasise that solutions for a nuanced view of religion and its relationship to politics can also be found within the religion itself. This means that we as a Muslim community need to utilise our own resources to distance ourselves from radical ideologies and build a positive and supportive community.

Islam emphasises the importance of justice, tolerance, peace and compassion in many of its teachings and practices. For example, the Qur'an emphasises that all people are equal, regardless of their origin or religion, and that justice and mercy are important values that every Muslim should live by. Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad emphasised in his teachings that peace and tolerance are fundamental values of Islam and that violence and extremism are unacceptable.

As an Islamic theologian, I believe it is important to emphasise and discuss these issues in order to promote a positive and nuanced understanding of Islam and its relationship to politics. We must endeavour to integrate these values into our daily lives and be an example of a positive and supportive community. This means that we as Muslims must actively work for justice and peace, both within our community and outside it. At the same time, to create an environment of mutual respect and tolerance, we must also avoid stereotypes and prejudices against other religions and cultures. We must strive to promote dialogue and understanding between different communities. We must also ensure that we do not allow ourselves to be taken in by those who use Islam as a justification for violence and extremism.

Overall, I believe that a nuanced view of Islam and its relationship to politics is only possible if we focus on our shared

values and principles. We must endeavour to build a community that is based on justice, peace, tolerance and compassion and that actively promotes these values. Only in this way can we promote a positive and nuanced understanding of Islam and its relationship to politics, while building a positive and supportive community.

Summary

A nationwide overview of civil society and state counselling services and networks is one of the foundations of prevention and intervention work in the field of religiously motivated extremism and Islamism. Counsellors have the opportunity to exchange ideas and receive further professional training within their field of work in various networking and exchange formats, such as through the German Council for Preventing Extremism and the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' radicalisation advice centre network.

A basic knowledge of the core concepts of the work is also crucial in order to be able to adopt an appropriate and nuanced approach to the subject area and to classifications within counselling sessions, so that clients can be approached and advised in a professional manner. The focus is on the diversity of different understandings. The aim is not to present an exact definition, but to make it clear that a range of understandings prevails, each of which allows different points of emphasis. It is therefore important to understand the complexity of the topic and yet make it comprehensible in practical terms.

Notes:

- German radicalisation prevention in the field of religiously motivated extremism involves various civil society and governmental actors and networks through which the work can be continuously reflected upon, adapted to changing needs and further developed.
- Different core terms such as radicalisation, extremism and terrorism, as well as religiously motivated extremism, Islamism and Salafism, are used in the practice of social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling and are sometimes used synonymously. They have different points of emphasis and are often subjected to various kinds of criticism. Counsellors should be able to analyse these terms critically and relate them to each other. In counselling, it is often essential to be able to present the topic and field of work in a nuanced and accessible manner and to be able to make appropriate classifications and assessments.
- The turning of an individual towards extremist structures and ideologies is characterised by push and pull factors. In addition to other factors, experiences of discrimination and racism can play a significant role. Counsellors should be aware of these background elements and be sensitive and thoughtful when dealing with terms such as religion, ideology and Salafism, especially when it comes to their own attitude and the language they use.

Introduction to Counselling

Kim Lisa Becker and Axel Schurbohm

Specialists from a variety of professional and academic backgrounds work in the prevention of religiously motivated extremism. The same diversity is also to be found in the counselling approaches and methods which are used in social environment, exit and distancing counselling. For this reason, we start by setting out a framework for understanding counselling, before we go on to discuss counselling approaches, their special features and their advantages and disadvantages for counselling work. This is because, in order to provide support to people seeking help, practitioners need to be aware of their options and limitations. If the framework and boundaries are not clearly defined, the counselling service the clients receive will not help them with the needs they have and the challenges they face. This not only has an impact on the success of the joint work, but also on the clients and the practitioners. Knowing and recognising the limitations of your own actions also helps to protect clients (→ 3.1).

This chapter presents the main features of the approaches which are dominant in practice. These are *systemic counselling* (→ 3.2), *client-centred counselling* (→ 3.3), *the Gestalt therapy approach* (→ 3.4), *motivational interviewing* (→ 3.5) and the *psychodynamic approach* (→ 3.6). All of these approaches will be illustrated by means of examples and explained by practitioners in the field. Following this, an (ideal/typical) process of counselling is then described. This is intended to provide some orientation when it comes to offering guidance and support (→ 3.7).

Counselling and Therapy

As there are overlaps in the tasks, approaches and methods used in counselling and therapy, it is often difficult to make a clear distinction between the two fields. The boundary between them is to some extent fluid and they therefore cannot be clearly distinguished from one another. Both fields often involve painful or mentally exhausting changes in thought and behaviour which enable clients to gain new experiences and stimulate the development of new strategies for action. However, counselling and therapy differ in terms of their target groups, the reasons for their use, their formal legal status and their practical orientation. From a historical perspective, counselling and psychotherapy have developed more or less independently of each other and have become established in different social fields (for details see Volger 2014: 21). The decisive difference here is between “counselling” and “therapeutic services” on the one hand and “(psycho)therapy” on the other.

i

Counselling, therapeutic services and (psycho)therapy

In Germany, psychotherapy in the narrower sense is used to treat people who suffer from mental illnesses as defined by German social legislation. “Therapy” is a protected term in Germany, in contrast to the term “therapist” or special “therapeutic services”. Anyone who practises medicine or alternative medicine without a state licence to do so is liable to prosecution. Psychotherapeutic services which require a licence to practise are therefore generally covered by health insurance.

“Counselling”, on the other hand, is concerned with overcoming social difficulties outside the medical field. Thus, the legislation stipulates that counselling (formulated in German Social Code VIII for the area of youth welfare and in German Social Code V for general social counselling) can be distinguished from psychotherapy (regulated in German Social Code I since 1999) (cf. Volger 2014: 23). However, therapeutic services can also be understood as special approaches which are separate from or complementary to psychotherapeutic services (e.g. systemic family therapy, Gestalt therapy).

This means that the term “therapist” includes both those with a medical licence and/or alternative medicine practitioners as well as those who are not allowed to offer therapy in the narrower sense – but who can provide therapeutic services. Both can be found in the field of prevention and intervention work related to religiously motivated extremism.

In contrast to counselling, therapeutic services often have a closer connection to therapy and psychotherapy, as they can only partly be formally or legally classified as counselling – some counselling centres sometimes also offer therapy, others therapeutic services, but the vast majority only offer counselling. When this book refers to special therapeutic services, these are usually therapeutic approaches which are similar to counselling work and, in contrast to (psycho)therapy, do not require a licence to practise or low-threshold alternative practitioner training.

Counselling and, for the most part, special therapeutic services, which are the focus of this field of work, offer support to people facing challenges in dealing with stressful situations, crises or problems in managing their lives in relationships, families or the world of work, without the need for a (certified/diagnosed) mental illness to be obviously present. Counselling supports people in developing their own attitudes and opinions as well as in connecting with their feelings (cf. Volger 2014: 31). It often has a lower threshold and sometimes a shorter-term character than (psycho)therapy, as well as often having a complementary focus on the social environment, which is explicitly included within counselling processes. Counselling is intended to help clients to develop (new) solutions for the situation at hand and to regain access to the resources available to them, either within themselves or within their social network. It is based on professional standards such as respect, appreciation, cooperation on an equal footing, respect for personal responsibility and confidentiality (cf. DGfB 2023). It is usually offered by counselling centres whose services are not funded by statutory health insurance but by other means (e.g. state subsidies, coverage of costs by those seeking counselling) (cf. Schwing/Fryszer 2015: 11f.). During counselling in the context of religiously motivated extremism, the topic of mental illness can arise. Therapeutic services and counselling in the field of religiously motivated extremism can thus open doors for those affected: on the one hand providing access to distancing and deradicalisation services and on the other providing access to the help they need from the healthcare system. Access to the generally hard-to-reach target group of (presumed) radicalised individuals is often more likely to be achieved via suitably designed counselling services, as the clients usually

have a high level of mistrust – especially towards health and state services.

However, even with appropriate training and solid specialist knowledge of psychiatric illnesses, it is not (always) possible to recognise such problems when counselling begins. Time and external support may therefore be required in order to draw the boundary between (psycho)therapy and counselling/therapeutic services. Support can be provided through professional exchange in a multi-professional team or through peer case consultation (→ 8). In addition, regular external supervision is recommended, during which such topics can be addressed. Such sessions also provide counsellors with an opportunity to reflect on their own responsibilities in counselling work and to examine their own role and mindset (→ 4). It is conceivable that a practitioner may realise that the available services offered by the counselling centre and their own area of responsibility and professional expertise fall short of the challenges faced by the clients in question or that additional services (e.g. psychotherapy) are required. In such cases, referrals to other institutions or to trained therapists can be made in order to meet both the needs of the client and those of the practitioner. This is not only recommended in order to provide the best possible care for clients, but also to protect the practitioners' own mental health.

Besides this, in the field of religiously motivated extremism, counsellors and therapists base their work on different approaches. In addition to approaches from social work and social pedagogy, the approaches of systemic, client-centred and Gestalt therapy as well as motivational interviewing have become established across Germany in the context of counselling work (→ 3.2–3.5). There is also particular potential in the psychodynamic approach (→ 3.6). Nevertheless, there are certainly overlaps, which illustrate how the different counselling approaches relate to each other and have influenced each other over the decades of their development.

The Systemic Approach

A “systemic approach” provides a helpful basis for practitioners' work. If practitioners adopt the perspective that all living beings operate in different functional systems which are

intertwined with each other, this perspective can bring order to the great complexity of human emotion and behaviour. A systemic approach thus makes it possible to grasp complex case situations. Specifically, this means that the complexity of social systems is reduced by using systemic tools (cf. Schwing/Fryszler 2018: 60f.). The tools include visualisations of the system and its essential core structures, but sections of the system (subsystems and relationships) can also be picked out and examined and reflected on more closely.

The systemic approach can be traced back to numerous therapists in various locations who independently discovered and developed a new way of working in the 1950s. Its theoretical foundation is largely based on Niklas Luhmann's systems theory. In addition, reaching their limits with existing approaches when working with clients was a decisive factor for many practitioners (including Virginia Satir, Gregory Bateson and Salvador Minuchin). They recognised that their clients' challenges could be better understood and solved if their immediate social environment, the system, was included in the counselling (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 33). In doing so, they did not see the clients' challenges as a disruption at the individual level, but as a disruption to communication within the (family) system. It became clear that complex relationships in the family system could not be explained by simple cause-and-effect models or if they could then only to a very limited extent. They were better explained by reference to the multitude of interactions and influences that affected the members of the system. At first glance, this focus on interactions appears more complex and challenging than previous approaches, but it is more effective at achieving its aim as it enables new perspectives and thus creates solutions which could not have been developed by narrowing the focus to an isolated problem (cf. Schwing/Fryszler 2015: 17).

However, in order to understand the revolutionary change in the way clients' psychological and psychosocial challenges were viewed at the time of the development of this approach, we need to take a step back to clarify the basic assumptions of systemic thinking. First of all, we need to take a closer look at the concept of systems.



The social system

A system consists of at least two components which can be distinguished from other systems by a boundary (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 31). If the focus is on human anatomy, an individual person can also be understood as a system, as their individual parts (heart, liver, kidneys, etc.) combine to form a system that can be clearly distinguished from other systems by virtue of the skin that encloses the body.

For systemic counselling and the systemic

approach, however, it is social systems that are of interest when working with clients. All people are part of different social systems in their lives. They are part of their immediate family, consisting of one or more parents and possibly siblings, and part of the extended family, possibly consisting of grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins. They are also part of a circle of friends and may be active in a sports club or take part in other leisure activities with other people. Over the course of their lives, they will be part of a class and school community, and may spend time at university or doing an apprenticeship, before later possibly becoming part of a corporate system and also integrating themselves religiously, ideologically or spiritually into their own (belief or value) system. It is important to note that all of these systems have their own structures of communication, relationships and action, as well as differences in the organisation of their hierarchies, which can be distinguished from other systems (cf. Radatz 2018: 56ff.). These systems also generate, regulate and maintain themselves. Their mode of operation cannot be changed from the outside in a targeted manner (= autopoiesis). For practising counsellors, this means that they can only provide suggestions that the system and its members can use to then make a change in their own system (cf. Simon 2017: 31).

Alongside systems theory, constructivism forms the second important theoretical basis of the systemic approach. From a constructivist perspective, it is assumed that there is no one reality. Each individual sees the world through their own lens, which is shaped by the experiences and impressions they gather throughout their lives. The systems described above are also merely a construction, one which is supported by those systems' members. What a system is and how it can be described, however, always depends on who is observing and describing the system and from what perspective. Likewise, for practitioners this means that their view of the system does not represent reality, but merely their observation of the particular system, which they can describe themselves (cf. Radatz 2018: 78). This is the reason why they themselves cannot present a solution to the challenge from the outside. All they can do is accompany the client through the process in which the client works out their very own, individual solution.



The system as a mobile

A simplified way for practitioners to visualise a system, e.g. a family system, is to imagine a mobile.

There is something holding the system together (the point from which it is suspended, threads), which simultaneously separates it from external influences and makes it different – specifically, something which makes it a mobile. If one part moves or is moved (e.g. by an external influence or another part within the mobile), all other parts usually also move, and do so in certain directions. Their behaviours are mutually dependent. A change, such as the radicalisation of a family member, has an impact on all other parts of the system and possibly also on their subsystems and relationships. If one part of the mobile, which can for example represent a person, becomes particularly heavy, it simultaneously pulls the other parts up and so on. Practitioners can make use of this image in counselling in order to visualise how social systems work. They can, however, also use it to engage in dialogue with their clients and to explain the systemic perspective in a simple and accessible way.

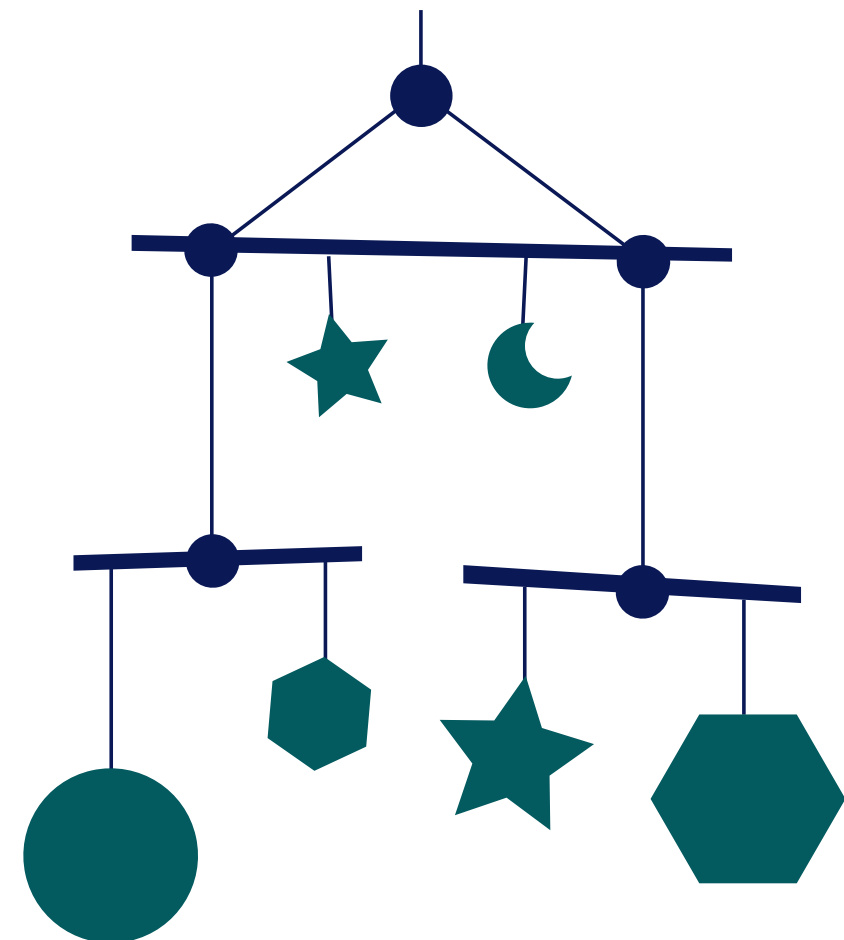


Fig. 2: The system as a mobile

A key pillar of the systemic approach is the focus on solutions. From a systemic perspective, it is not constructive to deal with a problem in depth. Instead the focus should be on developing possible solution strategies (cf. Wienands 2016: 19). When we have a problem, we usually think about it intensively in order to understand it and develop a solution or to be able to do things differently or better in the future. However, if it is more complex and incomprehensible to begin with, we immerse ourselves in the problem and cannot see the wood for the trees. We end up using a lot of our energy trying to understand the problem rather than investing in the solution.

The same applies to the clients at counselling centres. They seek out the services for different reasons and in different contexts. They may not be looking for a solution for the time being, but they need a framework that will provide them with relief. Or, as people who have radicalised themselves and committed a criminal offence, the court may require them to make use of counselling as part of their probation conditions. In any case, the clients know much more about their problem from their own (years of) experience than the practitioners could ever learn. For example, parents who visit a counselling centre and have already made various attempts to find a solution will have witnessed their child's radicalisation at first hand and have usually dealt with it intensively for a long time, in both factual and emotional terms.

For this reason, the systemic approach does not focus on a deeper exploration of the problem, but on the development of solutions. Systemic counsellors assume that the solution lies within the client and that the client simply needs the counsellor's support and new impetus in order to develop the solution themselves, as they are the experts on their own lifeworld (cf. Schwing/Fryszler 2015: 54ff.). For this reason, systemic counsellors use their methods to direct energy away from the problem and towards the solution. The aim is to open up new perspectives for the client by broadening their focus again, which has become limited to only seeing the problem. To do this, systemic counsellors use various methods or "interventions", such as systemic questioning techniques. Among other things, they ask about exceptions, possible supporters in the system or resources which proved helpful in different or comparable situations (von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 249ff.). In particular, resources are revealed and reactivated so that new solutions can be developed (cf. *ibid.*: 209f.). In contrast to an otherwise deficit-orientated view of actions, people and emotions, the focus is placed on the client's strengths (cf. Wienands 2016, p. 90). If clients are in a "problem trance", i.e. if they have immersed themselves in their problem, which is sometimes associated with strong emotions, their own abilities and strategies for finding a solution are often hidden (cf. Schwing/Fryszler 2015: 54f.). In order to break out of this trance using the systemic approach, the practitioner asks about exceptions or situations

which have been overcome. In this way, the practitioner and the client together explore solutions and strategies which have worked in the past to overcome challenges and which therefore harbour resources.

A short interview with Dr Vera Dittmar, Director of the Deradicalisation Research Centre (FORA) in IFAK e. V.'s Grenzgänger network.

You do disengagement work in the context of religiously motivated extremism, where you work with the client and/or their family and wider networks, mainly using systemic counselling. How would you describe this approach?

Dr Vera Dittmar: The systemic counselling approach is based on a combination of systemic principles, attitudes and methods. The core idea behind this type of counselling is to consider the client within the overall context of the systems surrounding them. As well as identifying problem areas in the client's social systems, this also involves looking at the client's basic needs, wants and resources, as well as potential solutions. For instance, their need for belonging or recognition may or may not be met within the family system (the microsystem). The term "system" here refers to a group of people and the relationships between them. The guiding principles of systemic counselling include a focus on resources and solutions, as well as on treating clients with respect. The use of a variety of systemic methods is an integral part of this basic framework of principles and attitudes (a more detailed explanation can be found in my 2023 book, *Systemische Beratung in der Extremismusprävention*).

Do you have an example from your work that might illustrate your approach more clearly?

Dr Vera Dittmar: A mother says that she is worried about her teenage son, who has converted to Islam. He has increasingly withdrawn from family life and is refusing to go to school. While the mother is desperately trying to keep communication open with her son, her partner says he has had enough and wants to throw his stepson out of the house. The couple are offered further counselling sessions. The counsellor also contacts the school. The son says that he is willing to talk to the counsellor.

In this case, we gain access to the person primarily affected (the son) via his mother, who was the one to initially reach out for help (microsystem). Individuals and organisations in the client's wider systems, such as the school, are also involved. In further counselling sessions at school and with the family, the aim is to find possible solutions for troublesome conflicts and to activate resources. The counselling also strengthens the index client's valuable relationships outside the extremist milieu and encourages reflection on extremist patterns of thought.

Why do you think this approach has advantages in our field of work?

Dr Vera Dittmar: Systemic counselling is particularly advantageous because it addresses one of the major challenges in our field – the fact that often we do not have access to the index client, the person primarily affected. They frequently refuse counselling, at least to begin with. In such cases, it is possible to have an important influence “indirectly”. By providing counselling for family members, for instance, it may be possible to influence the son via the mother–son relationship. In other words, the impetus for disengagement can also be achieved via close relationships. Another advantage is that a systemic approach allows radicalisation risks and developmental resources in the client’s social context to be continuously integrated into the counselling process. Equally, changes in behaviour are often attributable to biographical events, such as crises or similar experiences. Systemic counselling methods can facilitate in–depth emotional processing of these crises.

In your view, what are the limitations of this approach and how do you deal with them?

Dr Vera Dittmar: Like every other counselling method, the systemic approach has its limitations and challenges. As mentioned earlier, counselling a relative or professional (for example, a teacher or social worker) may open up more opportunities to reach a client, but you still need that first entry point into one of the client’s immediate social systems. If relatives do not contact the counselling service, either because they are unaware of it or because they feel guilty or ashamed, this is a limitation. In the professional environment, too, it’s not enough to make contact just once; you have to build up and maintain the counselling relationship. These challenges can be addressed by measures such as targeted outreach work and enhancing counsellors’ skills.

The Client-Centred Approach

The client-centred approach was developed by Carl Rogers in the early 1940s. This mindset and methods associated with it have found their way into many other approaches and areas of counselling, therapy and coaching. In addition, various basic skills based on the client-centred approach have been developed and described for practical work. Similar to the systemic approach, Rogers assumed that clients themselves know exactly what they need in order to solve their problems. They have put so much time, thought and energy into their problem and solving it that they know it better than the practitioners ever could. In Rogers’ approach, too, clients are therefore seen as the experts on their own lives. Consequently, from this perspective, it cannot be the practitioners’ task to use their expert knowledge to explain a client’s life and suffering to the client or to give them advice on how to solve their problem (cf. Weinberger 2013: 19ff.). However, while the systemic approach attaches great importance to including the social environment and contextualising problems not only in the client but also in the system, Rogers focusses primarily on the clients themselves and their own experience. He assumes a tendency towards actualisation, i.e. a fundamental ability of organisms that enables them to continue to develop and maintain themselves. His approach is aimed at supporting people in this and reactivating their ability to access their own resources and strategies for action (cf. Beushausen 2020: 39). This focus, which creates space for emotions and feelings, allows a stronger connection and trust to be established. The practitioners give their clients their full attention, listen and help the clients to better understand and structure their thoughts by repeating what they have said in their own words (cf. Rogers 2016: 40f.).

According to Rogers, the central aspect for stimulating a process of change in clients is successful relationship-building. Based on his observations and experiences, he developed a total of six conditions which he believed had to be met in order for a process of personality change to be successfully initiated: 1. the client does not succeed in integrating certain experiences into their self-image in their current life situation, leading either to a defensive response or simply to the partial integration of their experiences (incongruence). A typical example of this is the experience of everyday racism among people born and raised in Germany, who continue to be categorised as foreigners by portions of the population because of their name or appearance

and may therefore experience a regular questioning of their self-image. Some young people also turn to extremist groups on the basis of such experiences and thus avoid what might be a painful confrontation with their own identity (defence). 2. Establishing a connection, i.e. a relationship between counsellor and client, is fundamental for change to take place. 3. It is essential for the practitioner to be open to the client's own experience in their work and to act as a person and not to adopt the role of expert (authenticity/congruence). 4. The counsellor meets their clients in this process with an attitude of appreciation and accepts them as they are. The counsellor refrains from evaluating the clients' appearance and behaviour and accepts them in whatever way they encounter them (unconditional appreciation). 5. The counsellor tries to put themselves in their clients' shoes and to see their experience and perceptions from their clients' own subjective view of the world (empathic understanding). 6. The clients, in turn, must be at least partially able to perceive the counsellors' behaviour and should not be in a state (e.g. intoxicated or psychotic) that impedes or restricts this ability (clients' perception).

If these conditions are met in the relationship-building process, clients are able to present themselves as they are. In exploring their own emotions, attitudes, judgements and desires, they can move freely and do not have to hold anything back. They are given the opportunity to perceive themselves from a different perspective and to develop new solution strategies (cf. Weinberger 2013, p. 41ff.). For the above example of experiencing everyday racism, this would mean that the counsellor recognises the painful and ongoing experiences of the client and acknowledges the challenge of having to live with such experiences on a daily basis. Feelings of grief and anger can be given plenty of room and are not negatively connoted but welcomed, thus enabling the client to be seen and appreciated, in their relationship with the practitioner, as a person with their own identity. This form of recognition may make protective behaviour or defensive responses, e.g. seeking identity in an extremist group that is perceived as strong, less necessary and lead clients to critically reflect on them, so that new ways of dealing with everyday racism can be explored.

A short interview with Thomas Mücke, Managing Director of the Violence Prevention Network, Germany (VPN)

You do distancing work in the context of religiously motivated extremism, mainly on the basis of client-centred counselling. How would you describe this approach?

Thomas Mücke: The approach is proactive and is aimed at the target group that has little or no motivation to leave the extremist scene. These people are deeply alienated from society and are in constant conflict with their social environment. Client-centred counselling and support is very different in every case and requires a trusting relationship and intensive, long-term personal support and discussion. This counselling and support cannot be implemented in isolation from the client's social environment; it always has an impact on the system. The starting point for dealing with social conflicts and developing a constructive private support system is the client.

We determine the client's biography and social position as part of the socio-pedagogical diagnosis. This step begins in the context of building trust with the person receiving counselling. The information can be recorded, documented and visualised using several established diagnostic tools used in social work. The combination of tools, such as a genogram, network map, inclusion chart and biographical timelines,⁶ allows a holistic assessment of biographical trajectories and social positions and is indispensable for case discussions and the development of a support plan, for example. Needs-specific diagnostics can be used to better understand the individual's history of radicalisation and to identify (un-)satisfied individual

needs as partial causes or drivers of their radicalisation (push/pull). They also serve the planning of concrete measures for the future fulfilment of needs in a non-extremist context.

Do you have an example from your work that might illustrate your approach more clearly?

Thomas Mücke: A school teacher made us aware that a young girl appeared to have joined the Salafist scene. We discussed his perceptions and concerns with him and decided together that we would contact her directly. For the first meeting, your own authenticity and interest in the person are of central importance for the later dynamics of the relationship. After several meetings, the girl was able to find trust in the practitioners, and through biographical reconstruction it became clear that she no longer had any stabilising factors in her life, especially as her father had died, as well as having a family environment that was difficult in other ways. The only stabilising element in her life was the extremist group, which also isolated her from all social contacts outside the extremist scene. Through the counselling work, the girl was stabilised again. New social contacts were made, conflicts within the family were dealt with and the girl was supported in completing school and her further education. The girl distanced herself from the extremist scene and from extremist ideas very early on thanks to the many conversations with the counsellors. But stabilising this process always requires the social integration of the person concerned. Counsellors have an important bridging function here.

Why do you think this approach has advantages in our field of work?

Thomas Mücke: Each approach has its justification and is beneficial if it leads to the people concerned being able to lead their lives without extremism and violence, and feel accepted in society and in their social environment. As well as constituting a range of alternatives, the different approaches can actually complement each other, too. Which approaches show particular promise depends on the case and therefore requires a multi-perspective professional case clarification at the beginning, which includes a variety of perspectives and is based on systematic socio-educational diagnostics. Based on this, we then develop a support plan and derive methodological approaches. The special feature of client-centred counselling is that it reaches a target group that it is otherwise difficult to approach. Both practical experience of distancing work and evaluations show that the majority of clients are able to distance themselves from extremism through this continuous counselling and support. Ultimately, this results in extremism losing a significant portion of its recruitment potential. For this reason, extremist organisations are currently also taking action against civil society organisations on the internet in order to make it more difficult to make contact with their clients.

In your view, what are the limitations of this approach and how do you deal with them?

Thomas Mücke: All distancing work depends on the person's willingness to take responsibility for their own distancing process. Those involved in distancing work can repeatedly offer help, but they cannot force someone to engage in the process. A small portion of the target group therefore cannot (currently) be reached. As professionals, we must either accept this or identify other options outside our own specialist area. This can mean, for example, putting the client in touch with other services or initially just offering support for those in their personal environment. It is important that the offer that has been made remains in place, as experience shows that the people concerned may well get in touch and show interest at a later point.

Another limitation is that clients may deliberately attempt to deceive practitioners. Although this rarely happens, practitioners are aware of this possibility and will work out the next steps during their peer case consultation, which can even result in the counselling case being terminated.

There may also be problem areas that lie outside the field of social pedagogy, e.g. significantly impaired mental health. Needs-based access to professional psychological and therapeutic services must then be established.

© Some of these methods are described in detail in Chapter 7 (Session topics). Regarding work with a genogram or network map (here referred to as a VIP map) see section 7.4. For biography work see section 7.5.

The Gestalt Therapy Approach

Based on a critical examination of classical psychoanalysis, in the early twentieth century Fritz and Laura Perls developed the Gestalt therapy approach. Under this approach, life is understood as a continuous process of growth, for which it is also necessary to engage with one's social environment, known as the "field". Life cannot take place in complete detachment from it. The aim of Gestalt therapy is to achieve the greatest possible mindfulness (cf. Beushausen 2020: 40), i.e. conscious awareness of "open Gestalts" – unsatisfied needs and feelings which may have been subconscious before – as well as to achieve the changes in behaviour required to fulfil these needs and deal with these feelings. From a Gestalt therapy perspective, behaviour and experience can only be understood in context, as people are in a constant state of exchange and are subject to diverse interactions with their environments (cf. Votsmeier-Röhr/Wulf 2017: 45).

Similar to the previous approaches, Gestalt therapy is a humanistic approach to counselling which focuses on people in their specific lifeworld, taking into account their highly individual personal background in their relationships with others (cf. Beushausen 2020: 39f.). It is assumed that everyone has both the resources and the skills needed to lead a successful life in contact with other people. However, challenges can arise (cf. Joyce/Sills 2015: 21), which are often accompanied by a loss of conscious access to one's own experience and needs, resulting in maladaptive behaviour. This maladaptive behaviour then manifests itself in forms such as introjection, i.e. the unconscious adoption of other people's beliefs and motives, or projection, in which one's own expectations and feelings are no longer perceived in oneself but rather in third parties (cf. Michel/Novak 2004: 168). Within this context, radicalisation processes can also be interpreted as being a consequence of this adaptation. Gestalt therapy is used to investigate such adaptations, attempting to promote the client's mindfulness of their own feelings and actions and to develop strategies to resolve crisis-laden experiences.

Like almost all therapeutic approaches, Gestalt therapy also assumes that our personal horizon of experience determines how we perceive the world and how, based on this, we make decisions and implement actions. In doing so, people actively construct and maintain their own worlds. This also applies to the practitioners themselves. They are likewise unable to grasp any objective truth, and they only look at their clients and their

challenges through their own lens, based on their own background knowledge and experience. Similarly to client-centred or systemic counselling, all they can do is seek to home in on the subjective perspective of the client through discussions (Votsmeier-Röhr; Wulf: 2017: 40f.).

Practitioners who take the Gestalt therapy approach rely on the direct experience they gain in the counselling session with the client. They assume that the challenging behaviours of clients do not solely manifest themselves in external situations, but will also emerge during counselling sessions and in the relationship between practitioners and clients, and can thus also be dealt with directly in these contexts. The practitioners try to minimise judgements, expectations and assumptions about the client, including those that take the form of projections and introjections, and to not enter into the exchange with the client with some preconceived opinion or theory. The intention here is to enable the client to explore the true needs and feelings which lie behind certain behaviours together with the practitioner. During these joint sessions, counsellors very precisely describe, among other things, how they perceive their clients, without finding explanations for their behaviour or speculating about it (cf. Votsmeier-Röhr/Wulf 2017: 38f.). A practitioner might, for example, describe a client as aggressive during a session, referring to the client's loud voice, rapid speech and wild gesticulation. Furthermore, Gestalt therapists also express the feelings they experience when in contact with the client, thus making them available as something which can be reflected upon during the process. In such a case, the practitioner could add the following to their description of the client's behaviour: "This makes me feel insecure or anxious." Once the practitioner has made some of their feelings known, these feelings can then be made the subject of discussion. This may show the client how they themselves may be contributing to their own isolation in such situations, even though they may internally feel the desire for more closeness. The approach described here differs significantly from the systemic therapy described above, in which the practitioner generally involves their own emotions to a far lesser extent.

A short interview with Harry Guta, Head of beRATen e. V. Lower Saxony, Germany

You do distancing work in the context of religiously motivated extremism, mainly on the basis of Gestalt therapy and counselling. How would you describe this approach?

Harry Guta: Gestalt counselling operates at the level of experience and awareness and promotes creativity. In doing so, it puts the focus on the encounter with the other person, assuming that learned behavioural patterns will always show up in the relationship between client and practitioner as well, and that they can then be dealt with. Of central importance here is the client's emotional experience of the past, present and future, which is valued and reflected upon with a focus on potential resources. This will often be contrary to how the client will have been dealing with their own emotions and feelings up to this point. By incorporating the other person's physical sensations and emotional and behavioural reactions, meaningful understanding can be made possible and represented in the individual context of a person's life. The aim is for the client to better understand their own life and the current coping mechanisms which result from it. It is assumed that counselling goals are often blocked by learned beliefs (introjections) or by the unconscious transferral of one's own emotions onto others (projections). If these blocking mechanisms are uncovered through talking and working together, clients can make sense of their behaviour and take responsibility for their own actions. This is often the first step towards change processes in which challenging life events are integrated into one's own biography over the long term.

The use of creative media alongside the dialogue-based process is particularly valuable here. One example of a creative medium is working with the life panorama⁷ (visualisation of one's own resources). Furthermore, the model of the five pillars of identity work,⁸ which facilitates interpersonal diagnostics, should also be mentioned.

Do you have an example from your work that might illustrate your approach more clearly?

Harry Guta: A family came to us for counselling in the context of social environment counselling. The reason for this was their second adult daughter's conversion to Salafi Islam. In the initial sessions with the parents and the older daughter, it very quickly became clear that the father felt quite hurt. His face was bright red as he entered the counselling room, his posture was rather aggressive and he barely allowed the mother and daughter to get a word in edgewise. In addition to anger, rage and aggression regarding his daughter and her partner's lack of understanding, the father's strong feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness and sadness were also there in the background. Respectfully confronting these underlying feelings caused the father's emotional attitude to change over the course of the counselling process. Addressing his feelings also changed the family's contact behaviour with the converted daughter and new emotional access to her was opened up, contributing to less conflict-laden encounters. The conversion was accepted and the parents no longer aggressively intervened. In the

continuation of the counselling process, this management of emotional change led to the parents realising that they should see each other more and interact with each other in a more appreciative way. As we are not just concerned about index clients, but also about the social environment, the focus here is on a multi-perspectival view of the phenomenon of radicalisation. Ultimately, this process laid the foundation for initiating change processes in the older daughter too – because it is often only by consciously turning towards the other person that the person can be reached in the first place.

Why do you think this approach has advantages in our field of work?

Harry Guta: Working on and with feelings is a highly intersubjective and reciprocal process which initiates a lively and growth-promoting togetherness, taking into account all the phenomena that emerge in this context. One's own mindset and experience of the work is of critical importance here. The aim should be for people to consciously and thoughtfully live and shape their own lives in co-responsence,⁹ i.e. in dialogue, with themselves and with others in their social environments. The very present-focussed Gestalt approach is the very best life-affirming fuel for a changed way of life. The true power of change lies in feelings. Radicalised, ideological people are often in a permanent state of devaluing others and derive their sense of superiority over others from this. They often isolate themselves and others. Therefore, as an instrument of change, a genuine encounter with these clients, and work on feelings, emotions and their social environment, is preferable to a purely intellectually distanced battery of methods. Methods only make sense if the timing of the counselling process is right and if they arise authentically from the repertoire of the practitioner/therapist, based on their humanist training and their basic mindset.

It is only where liveliness is evident that life plans can be reorientated and realigned. Life cannot function with a negative perspective. It cannot develop any further. Unresolved biographical issues emerge again and again and continue to dominate our current behaviour. Such topics or Gestalts do not close. This counselling approach can support people in taking responsibility through understanding and initiating change (for goals such as distancing or deradicalisation).

In your view, what are the limitations of this approach and how do you deal with them?

Harry Guta: The Gestalt therapy approach focusses strongly on the cognitive-emotional level and is thus fundamentally linked to psychotherapeutic work. However, work purely at this level is limited. What is needed in addition is the integration of socio-therapeutic, social-work and network-support measures. The approach should therefore be integrated into an overarching network of accompanying actors and support structures, as long-term and sustainable change can only be ensured if several levels of understanding and experience are in harmony with each other.

⁹ This exercise is most similar to the "River of life" exercise (→ 7.5).

¹⁰ This exercise can best be compared to the exercises "The wheel of life" (→ 7.1) and "Identity molecule" (→ 7.6).

¹¹ The term co-responsence has its origin in integrative therapy and describes a form of intersubjective encounter and discourse on lifeworld and social issues which ensure integrity in social interaction.

Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing is a directional, client-centred counselling concept largely developed by William R. Miller and Stephen Rollnick (cf. Wagner/Küchler 2008: 3). The approach is influenced by Rogers' client-centred therapy, but is explicitly not non-directional, as it pursues the specific goal of reducing ambivalence and thus improving intrinsic motivation to change. In addition to Rogers' client-centred therapy, elements of other approaches from humanist psychology and cognitive and social psychology have also found their way into the concept (cf. Hofmann/Kohler 2013: 94). The motivational interviewing approach is therefore compatible with and complements all three of the schools of therapy and counselling presented so far.

Like all humanist counselling approaches, motivational interviewing is based on the assumption that, at all times, every person has the necessary strengths, skills and resources within them to be able to tap into their own potential for change. Sometimes the identification with the desire for something new is not yet strong enough to be able to tackle the process of change. However, motivational interviewing was specifically designed for cases in which the challenges arise from the need to awaken or strengthen the motivation for change in another person. "Above all, the method aims to structure conversations in such a way that, based on their own values and interests, people bring up the topic of change themselves, as mindsets are not only reflected by language, but also actively shaped by it" (Miller/Rollnick 2015: 18). Motivational interviewing therefore appears to be particularly well suited for the field of distancing counselling and exit counselling. This is because (radicalised) people rarely come to the counselling centres of their own accord or express their desire to move their lives away from extremism. In practice, practitioners more often find themselves dealing with ambivalent people who often still have one foot in radical (friendship) circles, whilst at the same time expressing doubts about these circles. Social grievances then often make it difficult to deal with this productive doubt in an intensive fashion. The approach requires the practitioner to adopt an open basic mindset characterised by a calm and respectful demeanour and an avoidance of confrontational elements.

Although the practitioner remains neutral towards the client's goals and wishes for change, they guide the process of critical reflection by asking questions with an attitude of

ignorance, thus directing the focus towards positive potential for change (cf. Wagner/Küchler 2008: 2f.). As with all other approaches, the cornerstones of motivational interviewing are empathic understanding and positive appreciation of the clients. This is expressed through methods such as active listening, affirming and appreciating the clients and focussing on resources (cf. Arkowitz et al. 2010: 6f.). It therefore combines well with the schools presented above. The essence of motivational interviewing is characterised by 1.) Partnership = mutually respectful exchange, 2.) Evocation = being convinced of the client's ability to find a solution and 3.) Autonomy = responsibility for change lies with the clients (cf. Hofmann/Köhler 2013: 95).

Miller and Rollnick have developed four fundamental principles which make the process of motivational interviewing in counselling successful and promote "change talk":

1. Expressing empathy

Empathy is expressed through acceptance of the clients, their situation and their entire being. As a method, active listening is an expression of empathy.

2. Developing discrepancies

In order to promote awareness of the consequences of their own actions, clients are actively made aware of the discrepancy between their own objectives and their current behaviour.

3. Redirecting resistance

Resistance displayed by clients during counselling is used in a positive way. The aim is to give clients the opportunity to develop new perspectives.

4. Promoting self-efficacy

The practitioner strengthens the client's belief in their own ability to change by placing the responsibility and expertise for changing behaviour in the hands of the client (cf. Arkowitz et al. 2010: 5f.).

Over time and depending on the pace of the client, these four steps can be used to reinforce weak existing desires for change in a targeted manner and thus also increase self-motivation to change, as has already been shown in various working contexts, including work with addicts (cf. Miller/Rollnick 2015: p. 238ff.). Motivational interviewing, which has so far rarely been used in interventions aimed at countering religiously motivated extremism, is therefore another promising approach which can further enrich distancing and exit work, especially in "coercive contexts".

A short interview with Prof. Marc Allroggen, Clinic for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry/ Psychotherapy, Ulm University Hospital

In your work you use motivational interviewing, a technique which to date has hardly been used in the area of "distancing and exit work" in Germany. Could you briefly describe what motivational interviewing means to you and how you have used it thus far?

Prof. Marc Allroggen: I primarily use motivational interviewing (MI) in clinical contexts with patients who sense that there is a problem and are aware of it, but who are still unsure about the extent to which they actually want to change their behaviour and their life situation. This ambivalence can result from the fact that those affected do not yet feel sufficient psychological stress, or because they have fears and uncertainties about whether they can achieve the necessary changes, or because they have good subjective reasons for maintaining a

certain behaviour. The crucial aspect of MI is that it stimulates the client's own motivation to change their behaviour by helping them to explore and resolve their own ambivalence, thus circumventing the resistance caused by external pressure to change.

Where do you see the potential of this approach for counselling in the field of religiously motivated extremism?

Prof. Marc Allroggen: The aim of MI is first to build the client's motivation to change on the basis of an appreciative relationship with the client, and then to strengthen their commitment to change by formulating specific change goals and planning the procedure for achieving these goals. Motivational interviewing thus enables the initiation of a structured counselling and support process. Especially at the beginning of

the deradicalisation process, clients often have a pronounced ambivalence towards the process and towards distancing themselves from the extremist milieu. Through the communication techniques of MI, and together with the practitioner, clients themselves should provide the reasons for why change is needed. When people perceive a discrepancy between current behaviour and personally important values and goals, they are motivated to change.

In your view, are there also limits to working with (radicalised) clients for whom the motivational interviewing approach would not be effective? How could these challenges be dealt with?

Prof. Marc Allroggen: First of all, it must be emphasised that although MI can create the conditions for successful specialist counselling, it cannot replace it. Once the motivation for change has

been created and clearly defined goals have been set, the actual counselling process must immediately follow. There are two situations in particular where I think the limits of MI arise. Firstly, when a client actually has no ambivalence with regard to extremist behaviour or attitudes and completely denies that there is a need for change. In this case, there is just no suitable starting point for this method. I assume that it is very rarely the case that there really is no ambivalence. However, a longer process of exploration and trust-building may be needed in order to recognise such cases. Furthermore, a lack of motivation for change should not be confused with a lack of ambivalence regarding change. In addition, MI is certainly not suitable in situations of immediate danger, whether for the client or for third parties. A much more direct approach is necessary in such cases so that the danger can be averted.

The Psychodynamic Approach

The psychodynamic counselling approach offers a further resource within the field of social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling, even though, like motivational interviewing, it is less widespread within this field than, for example, the systemic counselling approach. The psychodynamic counselling approach originates in psychoanalysis and has many similarities with short-term therapeutic work, without itself presupposing a clinical-therapeutic setting. What all applications of psychoanalysis have in common is that they are based on the assumption that unconscious inner emotional forces and defence processes are at work, and that these also shape interpersonal interactions (cf. Schnoor 2012: 21ff.). Since it was established by Sigmund Freud, psychoanalysis has developed into a diverse range of theoretical approaches, such as psychoanalytical developmental psychology (cf. Poscheschnik/Traxl 2016), and become an intersubjective form of psychology which can make radicalised thinking and behaviour easier to understand and also easier to change in the context of counselling and therapy.

At the heart of the psychodynamic approach is psychodynamics: a general theory of psychological forces and their interactions which is used to explain experience and behaviour. It is about understanding mental processes as a reaction to certain external and internal events and influences. This fundamental understanding provides the basis for the work practitioners and clients do together in counselling. Unlike psychotherapy, the aim is not to enforce early childhood transference attitudes, but to use the knowledge of these dynamics as an opportunity to actively promote the clients' powers of self-healing (cf. Volger 2012: 33). In psychodynamic models, the biographical developmental history is therefore included, taking into account the psychosocial field. The significance of primary attachment figures is put into focus and subjectively meaningful coping strategies are thus placed in a comprehensive context: "Thus understood, aggressive, violent and radical behaviour by children and young people is never just passive, never just a defect, but always the result of an active process of dealing with relationship experiences" (Traxl 2017: 8). A psychodynamic counselling approach is therefore reflected both

in biographical work and in practical work on attachment and feelings. A systemic perspective can be integrated particularly well here, as this approach also assumes that every behaviour (and thus also radicalisation) fulfils a function and can be accordingly embedded in a specific emotional and experiential context. The psychodynamic focus also enables unconscious, conscious or even taboo motives, affects, desires and conflicts to be placed and revealed in the present experience and context (cf. Finger-Trescher 2014: 44). Important reasons for radicalisation processes are thus classified as comprehensively as possible and understood in a psychoanalytical context, which also makes it possible to change them.

A psychodynamic counselling approach can be particularly helpful when working with children and adolescents, and can also have a significant supportive effect through “structural reorganisation by means of relationships which promote development” (Kirsch/Bauer 2017: 42). The aim of counselling could be, for example, to promote positive relationship experiences of a kind that was sometimes lacking in the client’s own childhood. These experiences can be had with the practitioners themselves, as well as with people from the clients’ social environment. Taking the clients’ experiences and feelings seriously, listening to them and appreciating them as individuals can help them to develop important ego functions such as impulse control, the ability to abstract and adherence to rules (cf. Kirsch/Bauer 2017: 42). These and other developmental challenges often apply to delinquent clients in particular (cf. Denkzeit n.d.). The psychodynamic approach therefore offers particular potential in the processing of criminal offences and within prevention and deradicalisation work in prisons. Whilst therapists working psychodynamically in a clinical-therapeutic setting deliberately maintain distance between themselves and their clients (“abstinence”), social workers and social pedagogues tend to offer a partnership-based relationship, intervening accordingly and asking critical questions on the basis of trust: “In psychodynamic or psychosocial counselling, the practitioner must structure the process in such a way that the clients’ motivation and ability to self-reflect are to a large extent encouraged and supported” (Finger-Trescher 2014: 44).

© “Mentalising is a skill of the imagination, in particular the perception and interpretation of human behaviour on the basis of intentional states (e.g. feelings, wishes, desires, goals, beliefs, reasons, plans)” (Kirsch/Bauer 2017: 49)



Inner and outer space

To internalise a psychodynamic approach to counselling, it can be helpful to imagine people as existing within different spaces which are all related to each other and influence each other. There is an inner space, full of feelings and experiences, but also an outer space through which people move with all their experiences and feelings. This outer space can change, new people and experiences can appear, and these people and experiences can be influenced by the inner space just as much as they themselves in turn influence the outer space. The more understanding there is of the interrelationship and interdependence of the spaces, the better the challenges can be dealt with and the potential for change realised. As elements of the client’s current outer space the more appreciative practitioners are in dealing with their clients’ inner self, the more trusting and motivating the working relationship can be made. This is a particular resource for mutual dynamics.

Of course, transference and countertransference also sometimes occur in counselling settings (→ 4.4). From a psychodynamic perspective, it is therefore important to react appropriately to such perceptions and to address them. This is because, by reacting directly to transference attitudes, the practitioner places the reality of counselling in the foreground, rather than early childhood relationship patterns (cf. Volger 2012: 33). “By also establishing a consistent connection to the manifestations of transference in the everyday reality of the client, [the practitioner] also promotes a more conscious perception of the potential for change” (ibid.). This means that clients are required to take responsibility earlier than in therapeutic processes, which in turn means that the counselling process can make a decisive contribution to liberation from regressive patterns and the development of autonomous options for life (cf. ibid.).

Practitioners can strengthen clients psychodynamically in a variety of ways, for example by means of mentalisation approaches¹⁰ (→ 7.2), biography work (→ 7.5) or approaches from trauma pedagogy (→ 7.10).

A short interview with Dipl.–Psych. Kerstin Sischka, NEXUS – Psychotherapeutic–Psychiatric Counselling Network, Berlin Specialist Centre

You do disengagement work in the context of religiously motivated extremism, mainly using the psychodynamic counselling or therapy approach. How would you describe this approach?

Kerstin Sischka: At NEXUS, we have been working with a repertoire of different services for many years, all of which are psychoanalytically based, but we always incorporate knowledge from research into radicalisation and extremism. This includes offering case discussions for professionals involved in distancing and exit work and for the Berlin probation service. These are based on psychoanalysis but also include religiously and culturally sensitive perspectives. We also offer counselling centres with which we have a closer partnership with consultative support, so that we receive clients directly for consultations during office hours and then develop recommendations for future work, for example regarding further healthcare. But we also do actual psychodynamic work with clients in the exit process and in rehabilitation (e.g. with returnees from Syria) or with family members by offering short-term and longer-term counselling and therapy in the area which constitutes the transition to standard care. Over the course of the process, we also support clients in their search for therapy, thereby building a bridge between exit and distancing work and the healthcare system.

Do you have an example from your work that might illustrate your approach more clearly?

Kerstin Sischka: One example would be working with a young man who had already withdrawn from social life as a teenager and spent a lot of time online. He came to therapy because he was struggling with a feeling of alienation. On the one hand, he no longer wanted to live in this society and developed fantasies about an “ideal Muslim community”, but on the other, he always recognised something good in this society that he wanted to hold on to. Psychoanalytical reflection greatly helped him to better understand his experience of alienation, including his psychological development. On the one hand, there were a series of very painful experiences involving loss and powerlessness, from which he had to protect himself by increasingly turning to religion. On the other, to an increasing degree he actively reproduced this alienation, suffered from it and then had to protect himself from those feelings again. The workings of inner emotional forces and defence processes with which he contributed to his own alienation were clearly visible here. We investigated this observation as well as the question of what function and significance the retreat into religion had for him (for example, to alleviate pain and anxiety), in which areas faith served as a resource and in which areas it then also changed, with him causing himself difficulties as a

result (because he felt he was a “chosen one” and because he was perceived as “lecturing” in social relationships).

Why do you think this approach has advantages in this field of work?

Kerstin Sischka: Psychodynamic counselling, or psychodynamic psychotherapy, draws on a very lively and enriching clinical experience and on theoretical developments within psychoanalysis. There are a variety of concepts which are very helpful for better understanding emotional processes, for example by looking at inner conflicts, psychological structures, the impact of early relationships or traumatisation and its consequences for a person’s psyche. Everyone has their own inner reality, which shapes their perception of themselves and other people. If it is possible to get to the bottom of these processes in counselling or therapy so that a client really understands the tendencies they have which cause crises or problems to arise again and again, it is possible to create motivation for real change. The point of reference for counselling or therapy is always the inner reality, the psychological reality, even though external reality is of course also discussed. The two realities, inner and outer, are interwoven.

In your view, what are the limitations of this approach and how do you deal with them?

Kerstin Sischka: The approach is limited if the external conditions cannot be changed – at least not within the framework of counselling and therapy. For example, actual discrimination or social marginalisation and racism do exist. These are societal problems. This poses two challenges for practitioners: clients’ real experiences of discrimination must be taken seriously and not reduced to “inner psychological and subjective perceptions” as if this objective reality did not exist. For work with clients, this also means that self-perceptions such as that of being a “victim of circumstance” do not continuously manifest. Instead it is necessary to find out what internal phenomena prevent clients from constructively taking control of their lives and dealing with challenges even under “unfavourable” circumstances.

Counselling as a Process

The phases and steps of the counselling session which have been described should not be regarded as consecutive, self-contained steps in a work plan. In practice, it may often be necessary to repeat a step, go back or skip a step. The boundaries between the individual phases should not be seen as clear-cut. They can also interlock or run alongside each other. Nevertheless, for orientation within the counselling process it is always helpful to keep a flow chart in mind in order to reflect on your own work, to structure it and to plan the next steps. This applies not only when considering a single counselling session, but also when looking at the entire counselling process which counsellors and clients go through together. This process is based on fundamental findings from counselling, therapy and coaching practice from a wide range of approaches.

Establishing a connection/building relationships/getting to know each other

The relationship between practitioner and client has a major influence on the success or failure of a counselling session. Although the measured influence of the relationship differs from study to study, on average it has around a 30 per cent influence on the continuing course of the counselling (cf. Beushausen 2020: 256f.). This first step is therefore particularly important. The introduction to the conversation, referred to as “joining” in various counselling approaches, is repeated in every session and is probably best translated as “small talk” in common parlance. Joining helps everyone involved to arrive at the counselling setting, to settle in and to align and converge in terms of topic and emotion. Joining is supposed to help clients to enter an unfamiliar environment, give them security, gain trust and enable them to connect with the practitioners. During this part of the counselling, non-problem-related questions are asked about the client’s journey, professional background and general interests, and the practitioner introduces themselves, the institution, the service they offer and the legal framework (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 225f.; BAMF/VPN 2020: 24).

Description of the issue/problem definition

In this phase of the counselling session, clients are invited to describe their reason for seeking counselling. What is the reason for seeking counselling? Is there a backstory to the actual reason for the counselling? The questions which open up the description of the issue are open questions to which the client cannot answer yes or no, but can instead reply in detail in order to explain the background as they see it at that moment or in general (cf. Brüggenmann et al. 2016: 37f.). This gives clients space to describe their concerns in full or even to talk about them with somebody else for the first time. Nevertheless, practitioners should always limit this space by asking specific questions so that clients do not get completely lost in their problem (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 217f.). In this part of the conversation, the practitioner has the opportunity to gain a broader understanding of the current situation, to better classify indications of possible radicalisation processes and to develop an initial sense of issues of self-endangerment and danger to others (→ 5.3), which may need to be taken into account during the counselling process. The information gathered here can then be used to further develop ideas for cooperation and a specific task.

Clarifying the task

The boundary between the description of the issue and the task is fluid. Clients can start expressing their wishes, expectations and hopes for the counselling session whilst describing their concerns or problems. In order to turn the clients’ diverse and sometimes contradictory requests into specific assignments, practitioners are required to separate the different tasks from one another and define them in more detail during this phase of the counselling process. It can also be the case that practitioners have to reject expectations and requests made of them because they simply cannot fulfil them (→ 7.1). The step of clarifying the task is particularly important as it sets out the core of the counselling process. What do the clients want to work on with the practitioners? What is the aim of the joint work? How might this aim be achieved (cf. Radatz 2018: 151f.)? Although the issue can always change during the course of the counselling process and may need to be renegotiated, this step must nevertheless be carried out with the utmost care with respect to the practitioner’s responsibility for the client and the process. If not, it would not be possible to work purposefully on a solution and the counselling could not come to a conclusion, or it might even be terminated without producing results (cf. Brüggenmann et al. 2016: 61ff.). It is therefore advisable not only to work out a long-term goal with the client, but also to set short and medium-term objectives (cf. BAMF/VPN 2020: 24). The objectives should always be described in such a way that they are verifiable and can be reflected upon regularly during the counselling process (→ 7.1).

Processing and solution level

At the processing and solution level, the clients and the practitioners approach the possible solution to the challenges together. As clients are usually still very emotionally invested in their problem at the beginning of a counselling session, during this phase practitioners try to work with them to get some distance from the problem. In this phase, practitioners ask about exceptions where the problem does not exist or times in the past when it did not exist. Together with the clients, they look, for example, for comparable situations that the clients have already successfully dealt with in the past in order to uncover possible action strategies which have been helpful in solving these problems and can possibly be transferred (cf. Radatz 2010: 34ff.). During this phase, various methods of the chosen counselling approach can also be used to make past situations more emotionally tangible or to visualise them. In addition, this phase can be used to delve deeper into the problem, look at it from a different perspective and thus provide new impetus towards finding a solution (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 268). In the overall counselling process, this phase includes reflecting on the impact of the problem and looking at current changes in the (index) client's life. The objectives which have already been set provide orientation for analysing progress and setbacks. This reflection takes place partly within the counselling settings with the clients themselves (→ 7.8), but should also be carried out by practitioners as part of peer case consultation and, if necessary, supervision (→ 8) (cf. BAMF/VPN 2020: 24).

Conclusion of the session/process

In order to prepare a client for the end of the counselling session, it is advisable to briefly summarise the session, to state the most important points of the session and to give an idea of what the next session(s) may involve. In this step, either a session or the entire counselling process should be concluded so that the client leaves the setting stronger than before (cf. Brüggemann et al. 2016: 112ff.). The timing of the end of the counselling process is generally decided by the client. They decide for themselves whether they still need counselling and whether they have found it to be supportive and helpful. It is also possible that the task has not been achieved if the client does not think they can still achieve this goal in the current counselling set-up (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 245ff.). However, there may also be reasons specific to the subject area for the termination or even discontinuation of a social environment, distancing or exit counselling process. If the counselling takes place under conditions of imprisonment or probation, the termination of those conditions may also entail the termination of the counselling process. However, network partners in various federal states are making efforts towards ensuring a smooth handover to

organisations outside the prison system or continued support in existing services after imprisonment. The joint development of an alternative to counselling and subsequent referral to a therapeutic service can also result in the termination of the counselling relationship. The same applies in the event of the unannounced termination of the counselling relationship by the client. However, if the agreed goal of the counselling has been achieved and the process can be successfully completed, a review and summary of the counselling process can also be carried out at this point, possibly supported by a visualisation method, in order to highlight the insights the clients have gained (→ 7.14).

Standards in Social Environment Counselling, Distancing Counselling and Exit Counselling

Specific standards for counselling work in the context of religiously motivated extremism have been developed by the civil society organisations active in this field under the umbrella of the German Council for Preventing Extremism – BAG RelEx (BAG RelEx 2019).



Standard

A standard “is a considered and specific work practice or work action related to a specific object, a specific context and a specific intention, the exercise of which is based on a legitimised body of knowledge or a value system that justifies it” (BAMF/VPN 2020: 24).

Based on the standards issued by the Advice Centre on Radicalisation at the German Federal Office for Migration and

Refugees (BAMF) (cf. BAMF/VPN 2020) for counselling of the social environment of individuals (presumed to have been) radicalised into Islamism, experts drawn from the membership of the German Council for Preventing Extremism who work in the field of social environment, distancing and exit work have specified “macro”, “meso” and “micro” standards. These are based on the many years’ experience of employees in the field and form a basic consensus on which the organisations, in all their diversity and with their wide-ranging expertise, have agreed. “Macro standards encompass the fundamental ethical norms by which the individual or organisation in question works, as well as their self-image” (BAMF/VPN 2020: 8). This includes the self-image of the counselling centre, the practitioners’ attitudes towards the clients and the principles according to which support services are provided. One example of this is that the work carried out by the advice centres might be seen by them as “an active commitment to a democratic society” (BAMF/VPN 2020: 13) and is based on trusting relationships. In this regard, the six principles of voluntariness, appreciation, empathy, authenticity, transparency and commitment apply (cf. *ibid.*: 13f.). These principles should also be reflected in the mindset of the individual practitioner (→ 4). “Meso standards, on the other hand, tend to refer to general goals, strategies and approaches which are shared by individuals or organisations in a particular profession” (BAMF 2017: 19). Here, the common goal of all counselling centres is the social (re)integration of clients into society at large (cf. *ibid.*). The aim is to support clients in leaving extremist contexts. The focus is on stabilising and improving the clients’ life situation for their own good rather than from a security policy perspective, which involves protecting society from the radicalised person. Nonetheless, the elimination of a danger the client may pose to themselves and to others is also a goal of the counselling work. To this end, practitioners can draw on a broad repertoire of approaches to individually support their clients in achieving their goals (cf. BAG RelEx 2019: 40ff.) (→ 3). Finally, micro standards are defined by the methods and instruments used, which are applied according to the approaches taken by the counselling centre in question (cf. BAMF 2017: 19). Some of these methods form the focus of this book and are presented in detail in the chapters on communication in counselling (→ 6) and session topics (→ 7). In order to implement the above-mentioned standards, numerous efforts and endeavours have been made in recent years by project managers, project sponsors and public authorities, and more funding has been made available. Regular continuing education and in-service training, especially on counselling and therapy approaches, is now available to employees in almost all projects, as are supervision and peer case consultation. This education and training constitutes the basis of high-quality counselling work, to which this book also seeks to make a contribution.

Summary

Across Germany, the counselling landscape in the field of religiously motivated extremism and the prevention of Islamism is diverse and characterised by mutual enrichment thanks to different areas of expertise and professional backgrounds. It is important to distinguish between counselling and therapy and to (further) develop and make use of successful referral counselling structures in the individual federal states.

The systemic counselling approach has a prominent role to play here because its additional focus on the social environment of (presumed) radicalised individuals allows key people and resources for (indirect) distancing and exit work to be involved. The client-centred approach and the Gestalt therapy approach are also already being used in nationwide counselling structures and are easy to connect to the systemic approach. Further potential lies in the motivational interviewing and psychodynamic approaches, the use of which has so far been less widespread in the field but which are increasingly being adopted.

For counselling in this field to be successful and contribute to the overarching goal of distancing people from radical thoughts and lifestyles, it must be based on qualitative standards. Practitioners should therefore understand and offer counselling as a process, be familiar with the quality standards developed in this field and apply them.

Notes:

- In practical work in social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling in the field of religiously motivated extremism, several counselling and therapy approaches currently dominate, which may in turn be particularly well suited to particular practitioners and clients. They are closely related to each other, but focus on different perspectives and priorities, which can make a decisive contribution to the goal of distancing or deradicalisation, depending on the requirements and the situation of the case.
- Counselling can be understood as a process which is divided into different phases. Knowledge of, and reflection on, the different phases within counselling can help processes to be structured and reflected upon. This can give practitioners and clients security and orientation, provide scope for development and contribute to quality assurance.
- Within this field of work, helpful quality standards have already been developed and documented, and these are available to practitioners in the subject area to be aware of, internalise and apply. This contributes significantly to quality assurance in this field of work.

Mindset as a Foundation

Silke Baer and Dr Harald Weilnböck

“We care about the individual – about their life, their needs, their emotions” (Dantschke 2017: 227).

In counselling, a certain basic personal mindset with respect to the work and the client is required. At some point, most practitioners generally have an experience which causes them to realise that even the best methodological training and the most in-depth specialist knowledge are of little help if their attitude towards clients, e.g. pupils, patients or those seeking advice, is not appropriate. This is most easily recognised when no real connection seems to be developing and the expected response from the client does not materialise. Although there are a number of possible reasons for this, it is often the counsellor's mindset which determines whether a workable relationship can develop. But what does “mindset” actually mean?

Mindset refers to a basic internal stance which substantially characterises one's own thoughts and actions. For practitioners, this specifically means mentally preparing themselves for what will happen during counselling, based on their experience. In particular, it means preparing themselves for what they themselves undergo when in direct contact and engaging in relationship work with different clients in different situations. Being well prepared for this beforehand will make it easier to absorb everything that actually happens during the conversation and interaction, and to use it for a goal-orientated counselling process. To this end, it can be helpful for the practitioner to give themselves some time before the start of a joint session to recall, in a calm and focussed way, what they themselves consider to be the most important personal aspects and what specific attitudinal challenges may arise in their work with the client in question.

These aspects of individual mindset and any potential challenges in terms of their own personal mindset are something which practitioners can identify for themselves based on their previous counselling experience. This can reflect their own strengths and weaknesses as a practitioner, which they will have identified during the course of their work and in any accompanying supervision. It may be, for example, that certain topics become “trigger topics” due to previous counselling experiences or personal experiences in the practitioner's own life (e.g. grief and loss, exclusion or violence). These can put the practitioner in certain associated emotional states which may hinder the counselling process if they are not dealt with in a rational manner.



Tip: Write a personal mindset note

In practical terms, these attitudinal aspects can be recorded – for example, in a short mindset note that can quickly be checked and reviewed before a session or before meeting a new client. For less experienced practitioners, it can be helpful to think back to their training or to informal interactions which were similar to counselling. This quasi-meditative way of adopting a mindset can give confidence – even when faced with surprises when interacting with the client. It can also help practitioners not to expect too much immediate success to result from each counselling session.

Before meeting a new client, a practitioner can try to adopt a reflexive awareness by taking the time to visualise themselves:

In a moment, I am going to connect with a person I have never met before. I will get to know them and I will try to help them. This will certainly lead to emotional experiences and possibly tension and entanglements too – but all of this will be helpful and, in the end, I will also be enriched by it.

Short, personalised key points can also be recorded in the personal mindset note, for example:

- I look forward to meeting new people, people I have never met before.
- Some surprising developments will frighten me, but my curiosity will remain.
- With anxious, shy people, I often react in such a way that ...
- As a counsellor, one of my characteristics is ...
- I'm sometimes too impatient and my expectations are too high, etc.

④ Socialisation processes describe the development of the individual in interaction with their (social) environment and culture.

In order to develop a solid basic mindset before the counselling session, when reviewing the reports of previous meetings with the client, it can also be helpful to allow time to think about and consciously reflect on your own specific mindset issues with regard to the client. To do this, it can be useful for the practitioner to ask themselves:

- Why does the situation/feeling seem familiar to me?
- How does this affect me and how can I use it for counselling?

Under certain circumstances, the key points of a personal mindset note can also specifically refer to core methodological questions, such as questions of religion and/or worldview, in order to ensure the openness that is needed in counselling. In the majority of cases, practitioners describe preventative and interventional work in the field of religiously motivated radicalisation as one in which the topic of religion plays a minor role. After all, other important topics are also addressed during the counselling processes. Biographical disruptions and failures are significant, for example, as are experiences of loss and early childhood abnormalities or traumas. Individual family history is often of particular importance (for more detail see Taubert/Hantel 2017: 244f.). At the same time, having a basic mindset which is orientated towards the concerns and experiences of the clients and is open to topics and processes enables practitioners to recognise when religious experiences are of great personal importance to clients. These are usually closely linked to individual experiences. For example, some clients always carry the Qur'an with them. They can refer to quotations which are personally meaningful to them, and they are motivated to do so. In such a situation, and if the client so wishes, it may be advisable to work together with a religious teacher or a religious counsellor.

The basic mindset of practitioners should therefore be characterised by a high degree of openness in terms of content, subject matter and methodology. Furthermore, it should already be clear at this point that the repertoire of mindset skills which practitioners possess should always be as broad as possible. In addition to having the willingness and ability to work with radicalised individuals in a religiously and culturally sensitive manner, practitioners should also be open to approaches from social work, case-specific biographical and family work, psychological counselling and psychosocial intervention. Apart from religious and ideological topics, practitioners will also need to be aware of key societal, (geo)political and interpersonal dimensions, educational (relationship) factors and various socialisation¹¹ and gender aspects. On top of this, they will always have their own biographical and personal relationship to all these perspectives, which is something which needs to

be reflected upon.

However, it is not possible for practitioners to be thoroughly educated and equipped with background knowledge in all fields and subject areas. This makes it all the more important to have a fundamental awareness of which mindset skills may become important for counsellors within the prevention of Islamism and how it is possible to personally hone these skills. Within the sphere of activity of social work, the counselling mindset of the individual social worker is one of the most important personal skills: “It is based on specific attitudes and values as well as the resulting fundamental orientation of the social worker’s actions and it shapes the use of methods and the transfer of specialist knowledge within the counselling process” (Albrecht 2017: 45). Mindset is thus an essential factor for the success of interventions.

It is therefore all the more important to emphasise that mindset is by no means primarily to be understood in the sense of political commitment – as a political opinion, ideological orientation or ideological stance. From a socio-pedagogical as well as an educational perspective, the first function of mindset is to act as the basis for establishing a personal working relationship. We can therefore speak in terms of a relationship-orientated interpersonal attitude. This includes the corresponding mindset-related aspects of building trust and the accompanying confidentiality, as well as a consciousness of the voluntary nature and self-motivation of clients who are being counselled. This permits a professional mindset towards relationship-based client work in which political or religious views are initially disregarded. Instead, such views are only discussed once a relationship of trust has been established between practitioner and client. Building such a relationship always takes priority. In short: building relationships and trust, for which the practitioner’s mindset is crucial, comes first.

This makes each practitioner’s personal relationship patterns and expectations and the context of their own social background all the more relevant. This is why it is important to consider the attitudes the counsellor’s own biography contributes so that they can establish, develop and consolidate their own professional mindset. These attitudes can, for example, be rooted in the person’s informal personal habitus. However, they can also stem from other professional roles that the person acquired in previous or accompanying professional functions, e.g. if they have ever worked as a political educator, social worker or psychotherapist. It is all the more helpful if these biographical, partly informal and sometimes only partly acknowledged attitudes can be continuously reflected upon in the ongoing development of one’s own professional counselling habitus. This is because “dealing with one’s own professional mindset lies at the core of professional expertise” (Barthelmess 2016: 9). This means that one’s own knowledge and ability to act as a practitioner also depends on being able to examine

the different factors on which one’s personal mindset is based (cf. *ibid.*).

It is important for counsellors to have an overview of the various dimensions of mindset in counselling. These core skills are expanded upon below. They are not only helpful in counselling practice, but in many cases they are also essential. In addition to basic mindset skills, which are largely derived from social work and systemic counselling, specialised attitudinal requirements are also important in the field of Islamism and extremism prevention. Most of the mindset skills previously mentioned form part of the foundations of a practitioner’s training – which is why it should be pointed out here once again that a methods textbook can in no way be considered a replacement for solid training as a counsellor.



Within counselling, there is no such thing as a perfect mindset

However, when it comes to the core skills described below, it is not a question of counsellors fulfilling and internalising them all in the same way. In practice, there is no such thing as the perfect mindset. This is simply due to the fact that every counselling session, every individual story and set of circumstances – in short, every client and every practitioner – is unique. Depending on the occasion, different focal points can end up being decisive for a successful counselling process. The following explanations of the core skills within counselling therefore serve as an overview and guidance for the continued development of the counsellor’s own mindset and, if need be, a prompt for training in areas where there appears to be scope for further development.

However, one thing ought to be emphasised: within the specific field of radicalisation prevention, the demands made in terms of the practitioner’s own mindset can seem quite daunting. Nevertheless, thoroughly examining their own mindsets should not end up putting pressure on practitioners. Rather, they should be encouraged to recognise that they already have many of the core skills required due to their personal and professional experience and their educational background. They can also support each other in the exchange of expertise and train specific core skills which may require further self-reflection and internalisation.

The following core mindset skills for practitioners are of crucial importance for the counselling process:

- Diversity of perspectives and openness to the process
- Relationship, confidentiality and transparency
- Boundaries and confrontation
- Closeness–distance balance and entanglements
- Sensitivity to group dynamics
- Narrative–dialogue mindset and unrestricted curiosity
- Awareness of goal and empathy for all parties
- Aims and resources
- Basic psychological knowledge
- Youth–orientated perspective
- Political awareness and critical reflection
- Cultural and religious sensitivity
- Gender and diversity

Diversity of Perspectives and Openness to the Process

Based on the philosophical theory of constructivism, which emphasises how individual, varied and idiosyncratic personal views of the self and the world can be, practitioners will always proactively seek to open up space for different personal perspectives. In other words: the practitioners work together with their clients “to allow a variety of perspectives – and not to replace one perspective with another” (von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 54). This diversity is thus expressed by the

openness of perspective practised in counselling and by the fact that practitioners first and foremost observe their clients’ views rather than prematurely classifying or evaluating them.

However, for good advice to be given, bridges for mutual understanding also need to be built between the different perspectives and the individual circumstances people can find themselves in. An important element of the basic counselling mindset is therefore the desire where there appears to be scope for further and ability to understand, based on empathy and imagination.

For practitioners to be able to initiate processes through which individuals distance themselves from violent, radicalised or extremist behaviour and thinking, and to be able to successfully support the relatives of radicalised individuals, it is therefore necessary for them to empathise and understand what it is that leads people to hold such worldviews and join such groups. This requires the aforementioned attitude of wanting to understand. It also involves being willing to empathise with the person as well as with extreme situations and actions, without crossing one’s own boundaries or exceeding one’s skills in assessing others. This attitude is closely linked to open and unrestricted curiosity (→ 4.6). It also includes the willingness to deal with the motivations that led someone to carry out radically abusive, violent, inhumane or even barbarous acts. This kind of discussion helps in the counselling process, as it is the only way to authentically convey to clients that they are being seen, heard and taken seriously, including their individual stories and motivations. In the moment of being able to understand, however, it is then also possible for the practitioner to step out of empathy again in order to initiate the process of change.

Wanting to understand requires a fundamental openness to the process and the outcome in the approach, which means that the practitioner does not follow a modular plan or a thematic session plan, even if the counselling remains related to specific target agreements (cf. Meilicke/Weilnböck 2022). Practitioners should therefore always keep their focus and goals in mind, whilst remaining very flexible and open with regard to the path that leads there. Reconciling this apparent contradiction can be challenging. Being open to the process can be particularly challenging to practitioners if they have studied or worked in fields such as social or religious studies or political education. It is therefore all the more important that they make sure they adopt an open attitude to counselling. Openness to the process can also be encouraged by repeatedly witnessing the fact that the clients themselves are essentially the best experts on their own problems and the solutions to them. Ultimately, only the clients themselves can become the agents of their personal change in a self-motivated, self-determined and thus open process. The counsellor sets the framework for this and stimulates solutions which are already present in the client, but which have not yet been unlocked. This is done by using specific

questioning techniques and methods. The great advantage of this open-process approach is that it leads to a better, more binding relationship with the client. In comparison, approaches based on standardised modules (cf. Rau et al. 2019: 128ff.) seem to alienate clients and hinder their personal willingness to change, rather than encouraging it. Such modularised approaches are often used in forensics, for example. They generally just make people feel constrained and that they are not being addressed as individuals.

The direct and instructive counselling formats of the 1970s have been abandoned in favour of this openness to the process, among other things. Today, a participatory and relationship-orientated approach dominates, in which the client's potential and resources are addressed and in which their independence and personal responsibility are respected (cf. Kiefer 2021: 45). Good counselling will therefore ensure that the topics and concerns are primarily raised by the participants themselves. This is constructive because the topics and concerns can then be further explored, moderated and related to and used for the common counselling goal (cf. Uhlmann/Weilnböck 2017: 2). It is advisable for practitioners, however, to constantly remind themselves of this process openness and this non-directive and relationship-orientated approach in order to be able to establish it as a basic mindset. It is all too easy for practitioners to be tempted to lead clients in directions that the practitioners themselves see as favourable, or to simply tell them how they should (in the practitioners' view) behave.

Being open to the process and the outcome can also be encouraged by reflecting on the practitioner's observations and assumptions about the client and their views. On the one hand, this can be done together with the client during the counselling session. On the other hand, within the framework of the legal possibilities (→ 5.3), it is also conceivable for them to systematically reflect on themselves as practitioners together with third parties. To this end, they can, for example, use the format of peer exchange or intervision (→ 8), within which the practitioners can question themselves and continue to develop.

Furthermore, this aspect of the counselling approach encourages a culture of diversity of perspectives. This in turn helps to ensure that the client's worldview and possible personal motivations are met with great openness. In addition, this culture encourages practitioners to challenge their clients in a friendly way if their views are presented too firmly and inflexibly. In doing so, the practitioners will always probe and observe the current boundaries that characterise each client's ability to tolerate challenges. For this reason, practitioners do not actually have expert status with regard to their clients. This is because they are aware that the clients' personal views are profoundly shaped by individual experiences and deserve unconditional respect (Hochschule Esslingen 2021).



Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- What don't I know about my client yet?
- How could my client still surprise me?
- Did I also go through a phase in my youth when I adopted more radical positions? What were my motives for doing so?

Relationship, Confidentiality and Transparency

It has already become clear that developing a personal working relationship and, in particular, promoting mutual trust in the counselling process is a key component of the counsellor's approach. A successful working relationship with a corresponding degree of basic trust can be established if genuine interest in the other person and openness to everything that makes them who they are is expressed through many interpersonal signals (cf. Rothballer 2018; Thomsen 2012). It is equally helpful to convey respect, appreciation and curiosity for the person's path through life to date, with a particular focus on conditions which may have been difficult. This also includes being surprised and curious about the new things the practitioner will learn about the person, themselves and therefore about people in general. Another aspect which strengthens a trusting and binding relationship is that of emphasising the fundamentally voluntary nature of the client's commitment, as well as the client's self-motivation and independence and their right to withdraw from counselling at any time without complaint, reproach or sanction.

Factors contributing to the establishment of a relationship and of trust include personal honesty and the ability to provide information in everything you say and do as a counsellor. This includes, if necessary, being prepared to speak genuinely about oneself, granting certain insights about oneself when prompted or, if necessary, refusing to do so with justification. Here, every practitioner has their own options and boundaries, which they can make use of or openly explain. Displaying a sense of humour, making a point of being essentially "error-friendly" and recognising a sense of the ease of life despite all difficulties are also helpful for providing a basis for working together.

Other mindset factors which promote trust and a working relationship are personal reliability and mindfulness – alongside an ability to keep track of the course and content of the joint counselling process. The practitioner is therefore responsible for the framework and structure within which they receive the content and concerns articulated by the client. It is also very important to be willing to engage in friction and conflict and to disagree in an appropriate manner, whilst never questioning the counselling situation itself.

This interpersonal, responsible attitude and humanistic approach, which is linked to the assumption that all people are capable of learning and change and that they always have the right to make their own life decisions, is a consistent feature of our counselling work. Of primary importance, however, is the fundamental confidentiality of the shared conversation, which practitioners must reliably guarantee (→ 5.3) (cf. Rigotti et al. 2019). After all, in the absence of confidentiality, only a limited degree of trust is possible. An important part of a trust-based approach is explicitly assuring clients of this confidentiality and transparently explaining the possible challenges and limits of confidentiality, e.g. in dangerous situations or in the context of criminal proceedings (→ 5.3).

Based on the practice of the “reflecting team”,¹² counsellors can also allow radicalisation prevention clients to share their perceptions and incorporate them in their own perspective on their work. This can also be done by explicitly inviting clients to participate and contribute to the counselling process: “We would like to involve you directly in our thoughts and attempts at explaining things.”

This can involve, for example, attempting to understand, together, the background to the client’s radicalisation and their tendency towards violence. It is crucial to formulate your own interpretation as a possible perspective or hypothesis. If these formulations are understood by the client as explicit invitations and offers that can be accepted, rejected or revised, the reflecting team’s openness to the process and openness to the results is assured:

- *“One of my colleagues says that an important motive for your radicalisation is that ...”*
- *“... Personally, I also have the impression that ... is a major motive.”*
- *“What do you think?”*

However, current difficulties in the counselling process can also be addressed and possible explanations and solutions can be explored:

¹²The reflecting team is a systemic method in which counsellors introduce their observations/hypotheses into the conversation in a structured manner (for details see von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 335ff.).

- *“My personal impression is that we’ve been going round and round in circles for two or three meetings. One of my colleagues thinks it’s because you still need time to get some clarity regarding the phase of your life that we’re talking about here. I rather have the feeling that you are afraid of the changes that are coming. You may be worried that too much would change for you – and possibly also in your relationship with your child – if we were to talk about specific steps now. But maybe I’m wrong and it’s completely different. What about you? What do you think?”*

This approach represents an attitude of participation and transparency which makes it possible to establish a genuine working relationship on an equal footing. It is based on a fundamentally different self-image and will have a more far-reaching effect than an approach in which the practitioners define their hypotheses and further procedures entirely on their own, without involving the clients in their deliberations. This is because the participative mode strengthens the resources of the client’s independence and autonomy in the counselling process, without removing their continuing relationship with the practitioner: “On the one hand, it must be recognised that people only create meaning – i.e. their willingness and ability to connect – from within themselves; on the other hand, it must also be taken into account that they are dependent on others in order to be able to work from within themselves” (Loth/von Schlippe 2004: 342). “Those seeking help are therefore consistently understood as being autonomous, as non-instructable and as experts of their own lives” (von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 201), but as experts they always need dialogue with and support from other people.



Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- What qualities would a counsellor need to have for me to entrust them with my problems? How would I be able to recognise these qualities by looking at someone’s behaviour?
- How should I behave in order to show my client that they can trust me?
- If I were personally in counselling or therapy, when would I allow my therapist to talk to third parties about the content of our conversation?

Boundaries and Confrontation

For the practitioner's own mindset, it is important to assume from the outset that violations of rules and boundaries in statements and behaviour are very likely to occur, especially with index clients. This includes, for example, inhumane and/or anti-democratic views or breaches of the necessary honesty and confidentiality. Practitioners are not only aware that this will happen, but also that it is necessary and therefore is to be welcomed. After all, the index clients are in counselling for a reason. It is certainly beneficial if this reason, which is very often associated with inhumane, anti-democratic attitudes, is also acted out directly in counselling and can therefore not solely be addressed as behaviour external to the counselling relationship. In this respect, one of the most important differences between counselling and, for example, formats of political education or open youth work is that, when it comes to what may (or may not) be said, there are no red lines which could result in sanctions if they are crossed. As long as the client shows a degree of sincere personal interest in working towards a common goal in counselling, there are, at least initially, no limits to what may be expressed and advocated.

At the same time, however, counsellors also have the task of restricting some of this scope of freedom of expression. In their basic mindset, counsellors will therefore on the one hand support the fundamental openness and diversity of perspectives of personal expression, but on the other hand they can and should also restrict it where justified. Unfavourable client behaviour that is recognised as problematic should ultimately be challenged, and clients can be given help in outgrowing such behaviour. Setting boundaries and, if necessary, confrontation are important means for providing this support. Within counselling settings, bans on what can be said are generally not necessary or helpful, but agreements can at least be made from a certain point onwards – especially when it comes to the prevention of radicalisation. Such agreements can, for example, specify that no inhumane language is to be used in the counselling process and/or that generalised devaluations of social groups are to be avoided. At the same time, however, practitioners should talk with the greatest possible personal honesty about their own emotional reactions and sensitivities when it comes to certain provocative topics.

The mindset of practitioners should be both calm and attentive. This prevents them from falling into the state of shock

that can often arise during conversations or in a teaching context as a helpless reaction to sudden bursts of inhumanity and hatred for other groups. In addition, practitioners are fundamentally aware that every violation of boundaries or rules also represents an opportunity. They know that: *Connections are forged at boundaries*. When boundaries are reached or even crossed, it is not uncommon for moments of interpersonal connection and friction to occur between the practitioners and their clients. It is precisely these moments which can lead straight back to the ultimate reason that the counselling is taking place and initiate a process of change.

The fact that the practitioners are always attentive and critical in their attitude is aimed at ensuring that they do not ignore even the slightest and most subtle violation of boundaries. They can then raise the issue and address it. On the other hand, the fact that they are calm and remain attentive to their clients makes it possible to approach this confrontation in a prudent and carefully measured manner. Sometimes it is also important to recognise those moments in the dialogue when even a rather sensitive client might, perhaps unconsciously, be seeking a confrontation and find the lack of questions or objections disappointing.

How sensitive a client is to being contradicted can certainly be discussed openly with them, and this can, for example, also lead to an enlightening exchange about that client's previous experiences and existing patterns of personal confrontation. Are there perhaps stressful experiences related to intense and chronic arguments with others about certain ideological issues that also come up during counselling?

- *"What happens when this difficult topic comes up in conversation with other people?"*
- *"What would you like to happen?"*
- *"If you come under pressure from people around you, what do you usually do?" etc.*

By working out, together with the client, what the most appropriate form and intensity of confrontation in each case is, it can be ensured that the continued dialogue with the client continues to be of good quality. At the same time, this strengthens and deepens the reciprocal bond in relationship-based work. In this way, any boundary violations which occur, and the resulting setting of critical boundaries by the practitioner, can be used for the shared process, promoting the further development of the client.

In the field of political education and social outreach for the prevention of right-wing extremism, the evidence-based concept of a critically orientated mindset has been

developed for this purpose. It can be used to deal with all forms of group-focussed enmity and anti-democratic currents or movements. The term is based on the understanding that building a connection with clients (i.e. radicalised individuals, their relatives or their social environments) proves to be effective both in intervention settings for the prevention of right-wing extremism and in counselling for Islamist radicalisation if it is done in an appreciative and attentive manner. In distancing work, but also in incidental interventions at the level of what is termed primary prevention, social workers show their clients “unconditional and positive appreciation and acceptance of their peculiarities, needs, attitudes, actions and problems” (Albrecht 2017: 50).

In the history of prevention work, it has not always been easy for colleagues in the field of right-wing extremism prevention to recognise the need for “unrestricted acceptance”, and there have sometimes been heated debates about the “accepting approach”.¹³ This concept is to be understood in such a way that the practitioners are fully attuned to the reality of their clients. Of course, such an approach will hardly be successful if, instead of acceptance, a counsellor feels the urgent need to make personal judgements and moralising statements and to provide political and social instructions. However, there is something which always needs to be borne in mind: accepting and caring about their clients does not mean that practitioners approve of their clients’ opinions, worldviews or actions. Especially in the context of radicalisation which involves violence and inhumanity, this is out of the question. Nor does it imply approval in the case of lower-threshold phenomena, e.g. if clients display common prejudices and make generalisations which do not (yet) involve inhumanity per se. “In fact, a streetworker talking to a young person who tends towards right-wing extremism, for example, may well have a different opinion to that of the person they are talking to and may also defend it” (Albrecht 2017: 50). However, differences in opinion between the practitioner and the client should be handled and steered in such a way that they “do not impair the relationship in the counselling” (ibid.), which is something which would undoubtedly happen if the streetworker or practitioner were to make “derogatory statements” (ibid.) about the attitude of a young person or client (cf. ibid.).

For this reason, the term “critically orientated mindset”¹⁴ was coined several years ago as a further development of the “accepting approach”. The distinction between the person and their opinion or action, which is already inherent in the accepting approach, is reflected here in the terms “critically orientated”. It is therefore important to approach the person personally, in a respectful and understanding manner, but also to confront and scrutinise them objectively and critically with regard to attitudes and behaviour which may be anti-democratic or inhumane. A keen sense of when, how and to what extent this confrontation can be engaged in without jeopardising the counselling process

¹³The “accepting approach” to youth work was developed in the 1990s by Prof. Franz Josef Krafeld and a team of students in Bremen and has been the subject of debate ever since (cf. Krafeld/Möller/Müller 1993).
¹⁴This is a mindset based on a combination of “being accepting/supportive and being challenging/confrontational” (cf. Weinsböck et al. 2015; Baer 2013).

as such is an important part of the basic counselling mindset. An additional aspect of the critically orientated approach is that the practitioner never gives up on the client, but also does not give in to them (cf. Kiefer 2021: 45).

Finally, it should be noted that assessments of the danger posed to oneself and to others, as well as possible current dangers, are special cases of boundary-setting and confrontation in the prevention of radicalisation. This applies to young people and adults alike. As much as it goes without saying that in situations where an immediate danger to life and limb becomes apparent, an overarching duty to protect is mandatory and the security forces may have to be informed, the assessment and determined implementation of this duty to protect is sometimes difficult (→ 5.3).



Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- Which statements and behaviours would I not be able to tolerate or would only tolerate with difficulty? Are there perhaps personal as well as professional reasons for this?
- How, personally and professionally, have I learnt to set boundaries?
- How comprehensive is my view of my client? Apart from boundary-defying statements, what else characterises my client?

Closeness– Distance Balance and Entanglements

Openness, curiosity, encounter, empathy and shared processes of understanding, together with the equally indispensable confidentiality of mutual exchange, generate trust and closeness, which are essential and helpful for every counselling process. At the same time, however, counsellors must also ensure

that their attitude does not result in too much closeness or inappropriate and obstructive closeness and that the necessary boundaries are maintained, as already mentioned under point 4.3 (Boundaries and confrontation). It is important to be aware of the difference between a personal working relationship and an informal or private relationship. This is because practitioners can sometimes find themselves in relationships with their clients in which they unexpectedly end up fulfilling proxy functions. They then unconsciously end up being used as the attachment figure, as the friend or as the parent that the respective client lacks and wishes they had.

In such situations, professional boundary-setting and a new, more precise framing of the personal working relationship are required. Practitioners should never adopt a confrontational or harsh approach. Instead, they should seek an open dialogue about the fact that private needs may have come into play, about what this may mean and about how they can deal with it together. It should not be forgotten that talking about private needs is itself sensitive and it may be necessary to carefully limit what is asked and discussed and how in-depth the exchange should be. As always in counselling, it will be important to respect the client's personal boundaries with respect to shame. It is also helpful to explain to the client exactly what a professional working relationship means, why it has boundaries and what the consequences of a possible loss of boundaries would be. This can be valuable because the clients' private and family relationships are not, or should not be, unbounded as they too have their own rules. In this respect, these phases of counselling will not only ensure the setting of boundaries between counsellor and client in the counselling setting, but also promote a fundamental understanding of human relationships and the closeness and distance that form part of them. Family relationships and their possibilities and limits in terms of closeness and distance are also of great importance both in social environment counselling and when dealing with index clients.

Talking about momentary lapses of mutual boundaries is therefore helpful in several respects. In any case, it will help both parties, the practitioner and the client, to gain a clearer awareness of the similarities and differences between a personal counselling relationship and a private relationship. As a result, the client will be in a position to better understand the loss of boundaries in professional and private contexts outside counselling and to act more constructively in these contexts.

Examples:

- *"You know, I often feel like I'm your friend or your brother, and I sometimes wonder what this might mean for us and for our work. Do you have any ideas? And do you feel the same way with other people?"*



¹⁵ Regarding the importance of patterns of self-regulation and relationship regulation, see Denkzeit 2015.

- *"Sometimes I've also had the feeling that, being your friend or your brother, I shouldn't let you down. Have you ever experienced disappointments like this?"*

However, the practitioners themselves will also always pay attention to whether their professional distance is still intact and whether they might have transferred certain personal needs and interests to their clients or over-identified with them. For example, a practitioner may have a strong interest in certain aspects of a client's ideology, or be fascinated by their unconventional and courageous personality. Or, alternatively, strong compassion for a client may be triggered due to their difficult situation. In addition, counsellors in the field of radicalisation prevention are often themselves trained in the fields of Islamic or religious studies and/or may be interested in politics and critiques of society and thus be well informed in these areas. A strong interest in intellectual exchange as well as possibly excessive willingness to provide support and assistance in the face of clients' unfair and unjust social situations would be all too understandable here. Supervision and other regular measures to promote self-reflection are essential in order to be able to take on the role of the counsellor and deal with clients and their concerns with the combination of closeness and distance necessary for the role (→ 8).

The key terms "personal friendship", "intellectual exchange" and "parental relationships" already suggest that the concepts of closeness and distance actually need to be differentiated more precisely. Because it's not just about there being too much or too little closeness or distance. Rather, people develop certain entanglements in relationship patterns during their lives, and clients – as well as practitioners – will have internalised these and already have had their relationships with friends, partners or parents shaped by them. There are numerous forms of such relationship patterns and entanglements. They represent complex responses to individual needs and are geared towards personal satisfaction and protection as well as encouragement. These are referred to as patterns of self-regulation and relationship regulation,¹⁵ whilst in the context of entanglements we often also talk about transference.

Within counselling, this means that these entanglements or transference can be affected by complex behavioural patterns. For example, clients may have a strong and persistent tendency to impress, win over or entertain the practitioner. They may follow unconscious strategies in which they try to gain control over the other person through a variety of communicative manoeuvres. There may be an internalised impulse to confuse the practitioner, either reflecting a deeply rooted disorientation or functioning as a means of preventing the practitioner or the conversation from touching on certain topics.

The fact that this and other forms of transference or entanglement also occur in the counselling process is not in

itself problematic. Rather, it is to be expected. And similarly to the violations of the rules of basic human respect described above, this is also to be welcomed, because these patterns can then be directly dealt with in counselling: those who don't get entangled can't change things. This means that a working relationship must first be successfully established so that transference patterns can be mobilised and entanglements can develop. The counsellor then plays a role and can begin to understand and change this role together with the client, insofar as this corresponds to the counselling goal, i.e. there is some connection to radicalisation.

This makes it all the more important for the practitioner to expect these entanglements from the outset, to welcome them and to be curious about them. This is all done with the confidence that they will be important and meaningful for the counselling process, so that the practitioner will ultimately be able to recognise these entanglements and address them in a sensitive manner – even if they may at times be accompanied by stressful and unsettling moments. With increasing experience, practitioners will develop the ability to sense these entanglements, which are often expressed very subtly. Then they will also be able to register the early and subtle perceptions of an imminent loss of boundaries, for example if a client unconsciously tries to take control, to confuse and distract the practitioner or to fulfil a need for friendship for themselves.

Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- What characteristics or life experiences connect me with my client? Where are the similarities between us?
- Is there anybody in my private environment who the client reminds me of?
- Which characteristics or behaviours do I find rather strange in my client? Have I ever encountered these characteristics or behaviours in my personal relationships – whether in myself or others – and has this programmed me to react negatively?



Sensitivity to Group Dynamics

Another core skill within the counselling mindset is being attentive towards the group dynamics of radicalisation and being able to deal with them sensitively. This skill can take on

a special significance for the people seeking advice as well as in the counselling process. It is no coincidence that the first reflections on the phenomena of mass psychology emerged well over a hundred years ago, even before Sigmund Freud inaugurated the practice of individual psychoanalysis (cf. Le Bon 1912 [1895]). It can also be observed that violent offences committed by radicalised individuals often arise from group dynamics. The processes of radicalisation and recruitment themselves are also almost always directly linked to groups, organisations and group dynamics. This also applies to the activities of individuals who are already radicalised or in the process of being radicalised on the internet. These activities, too, usually take place in groups, in this case within chats, where group dynamics are in operation. Alternatively, they are carried out by individuals who act under the strong subjective impression that they have a formidable and powerful group behind them.

From a psychological point of view, it is particularly noteworthy that, in group situations, the issues of closeness–distance balance and relationship entanglements acquire an additional degree of intensification and complexity. After all, group dynamics are in essence nothing more than a very complex form of relationship entanglement in an interactive constellation consisting of more than two people. Such entanglements can lead all the more quickly to a loss of personal boundaries and closeness–distance balance, with individuals acting out their insecurity through aggressive reactions. It will thus be all the better if practitioners adjust their mindset in such a way that they always take into account the interactive and dynamic group experiences that were formative for their clients. If, for example, clients mention that they have found like-minded acquaintances, or if they talk about a change in their circle of friends, a closer look together at the dynamics within the groups in question and their own experiences within them will often provide insights: What different roles and positions could be identified in this group? What role did the client play? How satisfied or dissatisfied was the client with this? What other roles seemed fascinating or worth striving for? Which internal coalitions were formed with certain members against others? Which hierarchies were significant? How were the group's external relations organised? etc. Remembering and reflecting on specific group dynamics can therefore provide important stimuli for counselling.



Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- Which groups did I spend a lot of time with in earlier phases of my life and why?
- What roles and functions did I have in each of these groups and which other positions were closest to me or far away?

- Did I find it easy or difficult to make myself heard in the group and express my own views? What was it that caused me to dare to defend my own opinions within the group and what caused me to be reserved at other times?
- How did I react when other people criticised or “attacked” my group? Can I remember situations which serve as examples of how I was able to allow and recognise this criticism?

Narrative-Dialogue Mindset and Unrestricted Curiosity

“Experiences are consolidated in stories. They can only be remembered through stories. Those things which are not given a narrative structure are lost to memory” (Bruner 1997, quoted from von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2013: 59). Recounting personal experiences in detail can generate processes of insight into one’s own individual experiences and life story – this also applies to how a radicalisation process occurred in each individual case, and due to which biographical, familial and socio-spatial circumstances. When key scenes from one’s own life and experiences are recounted in depth – in a protected and inspiring space together with a co-narrative companion – this is where an emotionally rich and intellectually aware working-through of the experience can begin. This can then lead to decisive individual developments and thus to depolarising and deradicalising effects as well (cf. Weilnböck 2022a; Weilnböck 2022b).

In some cases, a situation is conceivable in which potentially criminal behaviour can be inferred from the client’s reports. This is another reason why it is crucial to inform clients in advance about the legal context, such as the lack of a right to refuse to testify. It may therefore be advisable to only explicitly include such a process in the counselling once criminal proceedings have already taken place (→ 5.3). Sharing and listening to stories about each other’s lives and experiences is then all the more important, making the aspect of ideological and possibly polarised arguments about opinions and views far less significant.

This enables yet more effective processes of personal change to be set in motion.

Practising a narrative-dialogical approach in counselling goes far beyond taking certain methodological conversation techniques to heart, such as the procedure of narrative enquiry (using “How?” questions) or narrative situation questions (→ 6.3). This is because a narrative approach first and foremost involves unrestricted interpersonal curiosity about the client’s personality and their statements and stories, which practitioners are keen to investigate in detail, asking exactly how the events took place and how they were experienced. Furthermore, the narrative approach involves positioning oneself as someone who does not know. The practitioner is therefore dependent on the narrative and, in the best sense of the word, curious to get to know the client’s lifeworlds and personal ascriptions of meaning in detail and, initially, to accept them without reservation. The phrase “I know that I know nothing” corresponds to this narrative attitude, which ultimately also harbours the potential to achieve a more precise analysis of the client’s biographical and lifeworld situation based on the background experiences that have been explored. This can stimulate change processes that make it possible to accompany people on their way to achieving a prosocial way of life which respects human rights and involves care for both self and others.

Another crucial element of the narrative approach in counselling is a protective mindset, making sure to pay attention to whether and to what extent traumatic experiences are touched upon in the narrative (→ 7.10). If the reactivation of past experiences becomes too stressful for the person telling the story, it must be moderated accordingly. However, by working with a narrative approach it is also possible to address and work on those avoidance patterns which are often contained within clients’ anecdotal storytelling, where they assume something of a fictional quality, so to speak. This is because anecdotes often have an ideological bias or are determined by specific restrictions of personal agency and narrative ability.



Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- What questions can I ask to encourage the other person to tell their story?
- How easy or difficult is it for me to use narrative enquiry techniques?
- How do I feel about listening calmly and recognising and supporting the potential that lies in the pauses in the client’s speech?
- Which non-verbal speech sounds do I use during pauses? What conversational speech sounds can I observe in others?

- How can I tell that a question is upsetting me deeply and putting me in an emotionally stressful situation?
- How could I best signal that a certain topic is too much for me right now?

Awareness of Goal and Empathy for All Parties

What is termed the double or triple mandate, which already applies to social work or psychosocial counselling in general, can be used to understand the professional ethics of the mandate and the basic mindset of practitioners in radicalisation prevention. A dual mandate means that, on the one hand, the well-being and personal development of the client are taken into account and, on the other, an essential mandate from the state or society must also be recognised. This is particularly the case in the prevention of radicalisation, insofar as clear action must be taken for the benefit of both sides. This is because the social mandate of counsellors in the prevention of radicalisation includes the task of providing clients with targeted help so that they can find a socially acceptable way of life in which they are responsible for themselves. The life plan must be organised in such a way that it is in harmony with the fundamental values of a democratic state based on human rights and proactively supports and preserves those values. This is because violence-orientated and misanthropic forms of radicalisation tend to reject democracy.

In recent years, the mandate has been expanded to add a third mandate in addition to the explicitly human-rights-focussed and humanistically based view of client welfare and the social-democratic mandate of the state: this third mandate includes an additional commitment to good professional practice, which is based on the evidence-based criteria of occupational/professional quality and ethics (→ 3.8) (Rhodes et al. 2009). The third mandate also reflects the increasing professionalisation which is taking place in the field of radicalisation prevention.

In everyday practice, the rather conceptually vague notion of social worker partiality or advocacy for one's own clients supplements these understandings of the mandate of

counselling in the sphere of activity addressed here. This notion is primarily applied in work with young people. The concepts of partiality or advocacy echo the general experience that those seeking advice or clients are often in a socially weak position and therefore need special support. For example, in the case of an urgent request for counselling due to a young person's radicalisation, to begin with the main need may be mediation with local authorities (social services, job centre, school, police, etc.), so that support and advocacy are required in a figurative sense. Nevertheless, the practitioner must not lose sight of the level and scope of interpersonal counselling work. This is because the mandate of personal, development-orientated counselling goes far beyond the mandate of youth social work, for example.

Partiality is often accompanied by the additional concept of empathy for all parties, which – beyond the aforementioned mandates – first of all refers to all those participating in or affected by the counselling. This is particularly relevant in counselling settings for relatives or those in the social environments of radicalised individuals, especially in cases where the latter may not be participating in the counselling themselves. In any case, this attitude of empathy for all parties provides practitioners with a valuable opportunity to reflect, during which they can become aware of their possible bias in favour of one of the parties, while at the same time considering their responsibilities to the other parties.

To the extent that practitioners are clear about their mandates and communicate them continuously, transparently and in an appropriate, contextually sensitive manner to their clients, the responsibility that goes hand in hand with this mandate in the field of action focussed on here also becomes tangible. This means that in the event of a conflict, practitioners can immediately address conflicts between the interests of two different mandates and make them clear to their clients. Such a case exists, for example, if there is a conflict between the goals of being committed to the client's well-being on the one hand and promoting the social skills they need in order to live in a democratic state on the other. Whenever friction or a conflict arises, a secure mandate-based mindset will help the counsellor to make this conflict tangible for the client and to involve them in finding a solution or overcoming the conflict together.



Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- What things can I sense my client wants me to do?
- Which of these tasks appeal to me particularly strongly? Why is this? What does this have to do with my individual background?
- Is there any task that makes me feel anxious or overwhelmed?

Aims and Resources

The purpose of counselling is to stimulate and support the client's personal change process. For a structured counselling process, it is therefore essential that concrete and manageable goals are formulated together with the client and that a basic mandate is defined. These can and should be adapted and developed step by step during longer counselling processes, depending on requirements and opportunities. However, when and how this goal development takes place depends on the client and their own potential and resources. Particularly when working with radicalised individuals, the initial focus is often on establishing a sustainable working relationship (→ 7.1).

Above all, the practitioner needs to clarify goals and explore the resources available. The primary aim here is not to dwell too much on the perception and description of problems, but to fundamentally "think of the counselling process in terms of resources, approach concrete solutions and consistently orientate oneself towards the interests of the other person" (von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 209). This is all the more important as people who visit advice centres usually arrive with a problem-centred mindset. Often, a long period of their lives has revolved around a specific, isolated problem (e.g. personal identity conflicts relevant to radicalisation, conflicts with the law, the radicalisation of their own child, statements made in the social environment of those seeking counselling which are indicative of radicalisation).



Shining a light on the problem

It is often like shining a torch into the corner of a room: only the problem can be seen, not everything else in the room. These things may influence the problem but they may also contribute to its solution. Paying attention to the resources available to the individual and the possibilities of the current situation from the very beginning and developing possible solutions will have the immediate effect of making things easier for the client. The aim is therefore to gradually illuminate the rest of the room in order to see what useful resources lie hidden and within the client and to trust that they will be found.

Changing one's perspective from seeing deficits to seeing resources and potential reduces the impact of problems. This creates hope, which opens up a creative space for future processes of change.

However, resource orientation also means allowing a certain realism to develop as a basis for counselling. The objective here is by no means to be sugar-coating things or trivialising real problems. The desired goals and possible solutions should therefore be realistically dimensioned. It is also not always possible to work towards a direct solution to the problem – e.g. distancing or deradicalising the individual in the immediate term. However, coping strategies and resources can be developed to deal with the existing problem as effectively and practically as possible. This sometimes demands patience and time on the part of the practitioners themselves.

In the context of resource orientation, it can also be useful for practitioners to address the topic of resilience and the question of how the general resilience of their clients can be promoted. Here, "resilience" refers specifically to people's psychological resilience to psychological, biological and psychosocial developmental risks (cf. Wustmann 2018). It is not uncommon for people who are at risk of radicalisation, or who are directly involved in radicalisation processes, to arrive with very specific burdens which can additionally promote radicalisation processes. These are also referred to as push factors (→ 2.2). They can include the loss of close family members or friends, crises such as accidents or factors related to growing up, e.g. growing up in poverty or experiencing marginalisation and discrimination. These kinds of burdens can impair development in later life. However, they also potentially contribute to the fact that the recognition, family substitute, support and orientation, etc. conveyed by an ideology or its followers has a special appeal (→ 2.3). Nevertheless, there are also people who outgrow such burdens and, against all expectations, develop particularly successfully. In such cases, resilience has developed. Various factors are essential for this and can be promoted (in a targeted manner). What is special about the approach of promoting resilience is "that it focusses on the strengthening characteristics which are important for [...] development and does not focus exclusively on, or seek to eliminate, the factors which inhibit or even harm development" (Becker et al. 2021: 7). Examining resilience and resources makes it possible to see opportunities and possibilities in particularly difficult life situations and experiences of crisis without failing to recognise their painful nature. It is also very practice-orientated and can help practitioners to recognise, put in place and strengthen protective factors in a very targeted way (→ 7.3).

Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:



- What skills and characteristics that my client has do I find impressive?
- How has my client managed to overcome crises and challenges in their life so far? Who or what was helpful?
- What strengths and resources will help my client to deal with painful issues from their past?

Basic Psychological Knowledge

At its core, a psychologically informed mindset is not so much about having general psychological training derived from formal education, even though it can certainly be helpful. Instead, what is meant here is specific knowledge of psychosocial dynamics and any existing psychopathological characteristics which may be of particular importance in the field of radicalisation and extremism.

It is known that psychopathological characteristics have also been relevant in the cases of some extremists or terrorists. For example, some “correlations with narcissistic and antisocial personality traits” (Allroggen et al. 2020: 23) and with “depression and anxiety disorders” (Allroggen et al. 2020: 23) have been identified. “Authoritarianism, a lack of tolerance for frustration, negative identity” (Slama 2020: 323) and a “passive-aggressive basic mindset” (Allroggen 2018) have also been noted. However, experts have always emphasised that “possible causal connections must be considered in a nuanced manner” and that “the presence of a mental disorder is not enough by itself to explain the emergence of violent extremist acts” (ibid.). This may also be due to the widely observed fact that many offenders of this type do not exhibit any of the aforementioned disorders, at least not in a clearly recognisable way.

Nevertheless, knowledge from the fields of psychology and psychotherapy can also be helpful for practitioners and their basic mindset. For example, it may be worth knowing what it is that psychotherapists notice when an “identity fusion takes

place when turning to a radical group, in which the individual ego increasingly merges with the collective identity” (Sischka 2020). This is because the relevant case studies illustrate what happens and how it is possible to know that “ego functions [are being] transferred to the group” (ibid.). Here it often becomes clear how, due to a susceptibility that developed earlier in life, the personality is reshaped by ideologisation and how the “inner world is then dominated by mechanisms such as splitting, denial, omnipotence and projections” (ibid.). As a result, the people affected increasingly give up on independently asking questions, reflecting and feeling (self-)empathy (cf. ibid.). Radicalisation can also give rise to fantasies of an all-encompassing truth and of an exclusive in-group of those who know versus an out-group of the unknowing. It is also important to note that this often goes hand in hand with ecstatic feelings and a great sense of mission with respect to others.

Having a psychologically informed approach to counselling also means that knowledge about psychological and psychosomatic symptoms (such as sleep disorders, constantly intrusive thoughts, memories or a lack of motivation) can be discussed and dealt with. At the same time, however, it is important to set clear boundaries and communicate this when in doubt. This is because counselling cannot be a substitute for the treatment of such symptoms by means of psychotherapeutic or psychiatric assessment and/or therapy. Basic insights into the nature of these psychological symptoms and how they can go hand in hand with processes of radicalisation are a prerequisite for a solution-orientated discussion. The crucial practical importance of this knowledge for practitioners stems, among other factors, from the fact that “psychopathologically relevant symptoms and stress can also occur during deradicalisation processes” (Allroggen 2020). These may already have existed before the radicalisation occurred and may (re-)emerge because the radicalisation is to be abandoned – including its (secret) function of supporting personal stability. For this reason alone, basic psychodiagnostic information can support practitioners in their mindset and help prevent them from being completely surprised by the sudden onset of spontaneous psychological symptoms. Basic knowledge in this area can therefore provide counsellors with additional security in their approach.



Skills as a toolbox

The additional knowledge and skills that determine and enrich the practitioner's mindset – in addition to their professional and personal experience – are like tools. The fuller the practitioner's individual toolbox is, the more opportunities they have to respond to different challenges and exploit the associated potential within the counselling process.

However, quite apart from the sudden onset of symptoms, psychological stress can also “significantly influence and, in particular, hinder a counselling process” (Allroggen 2020: 6). Here, it is of primary importance for practitioners to be able to assess when the counselling should be “interrupted for the moment and the affected person supported in seeking psychiatric or psychotherapeutic help as a matter of urgency” (ibid.). A possible necessary consequence may then be the (temporary) discontinuation of counselling. After all, it is not constructive if a client is unable to implement specific “recommendations and necessary steps” (ibid.) because, for example, a depressive disorder, psychiatrically caused difficulties concentrating or symptoms of anxiety prevent them from doing so. Being able to assess when a client has serious suicidal tendencies and knowing what to do in such cases is also crucial for a safe approach to counselling (→ 7.10). Knowing the basics regarding how traumatic stress can affect a counselling situation also strengthens one’s own mindset. This is because people who have been traumatised sometimes react with sudden phases of remoteness (dissociation), for example, which are characterised by great anxiety and from which they then have to be brought back.

However, the aforementioned toolbox should be borne in mind here, as should its limitations. This is because certain tools and the training needed to work with them are the responsibility of other professionals such as psychotherapists and psychiatrists. It is therefore important to recognise the limits of one’s own options and, if need be, to take any steps which may be required. This is not only best for the client, but also protects practitioners from overburdening themselves.

In any case, however, it has been clear for some years now that more and more psychological and psychodynamic resources are being used in the counselling of radicalised individuals and their social environments. In particular, psychodynamic counselling (cf. Sischa 2020), psychodynamically orientated training based on a systematic approach to the mechanisms of self-regulation and relationship regulation in people (cf. Denkzeit n.d.) and attachment research based on developmental psychology and its formulation of attachment types (cf. Haase/Murawa 2019) should be mentioned here. This work is promising, because biographically formed and psychodynamically underpinned relationship experiences are often decisive in the shaping of later relationships, as well as in a counselling situation, especially if a well-founded relationship and attachment-orientated counselling process is to take place.

It is equally important for practitioners to support the emotional intelligence and psycho-educational learning of their clients, i.e. the clients’ own awareness of psychological phenomena. Experience shows that the focus of radicalisation prevention is in emotional and social learning rather than cognitive learning (cf. Weilnböck 2022a: 15). In this basic mindset,

practitioners will take the client’s mental states seriously, especially in terms of their emotional quality as human feelings. These include ambivalence, insecurity, feelings of shame, fear and aggression, but also crises of meaning, experiences of discrimination and feelings of powerlessness, which the practitioners empathise with and understand together with their clients.



Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- Are there abnormalities in my client’s storytelling and behaviour which I can’t explain and which make me feel unsure about things?
- How can I recognise when I am reaching the limits of my expertise? How can I communicate this to my client?
- Has my client experienced some source of stress? Who or what helped him/her to deal with it?

Youth-Orientated Perspective

If the radicalised individuals are adolescents or young adults, a youth-orientated perspective is required. In order for a practitioner to be able to take a supportive, advisory and, in the sense defined above, “partial” stance with young people, the practitioner needs to understand this phase of life. This means that the practitioner must have a basic understanding of the physical and psychological changes which occur in people during adolescence as well as of their probable effects. On top of this, some understanding of the possible emotional upheavals and conflicts in the relationship with the attachment figure is required, as is some understanding of the uncertainties regarding the independence, etc. which is increasingly expected or desired. A youth-orientated perspective in counselling always requires a high level of attention to the family and the family dynamics of the young person’s environment of origin. After all, it is not just parts of the family which can become important as potential contributors to counselling. The circumstances of a young client’s upbringing and their family and family history are often of considerable importance for their current situation and the specific reason they are attending counselling.

Even more so than for adults, in the case of young people who become radicalised, the focus should be on the following factors relevant to their turning towards an extremist social environment:

- The need to differentiate themselves
- The desire to be understood and accepted
- The need to belong to a supportive group, to have a (surrogate) family
- The experience of self-efficacy and meaningfulness
- The experience of adventure and inspiration, trying things out and developing further
- The feeling of being someone special

Extremist groups and organisations have generally understood these needs of young people very well and align their offers and recruitment attempts accordingly. To this end, they work, for example, with codes and language derived from youth culture. One of the things they do is challenge young people to do something very special or to commit themselves to something meaningful and make a difference, whilst simultaneously becoming part of a group which functions as a surrogate family and which can truly be relied upon and – what is more – joining a large, global movement.

These incentives and motivations, which are particularly relevant during the period of youth, must be considered during counselling, taken seriously and ultimately also partly compensated for with “functional equivalents” (cf. Möller 2014: 342; Möller et al. 2021) (substitute offerings). The aforementioned needs of young people should be considered as a genuine resource – both in direct work with them and in counselling for relatives. What energy, what desire to shape and change, what idealism, what courage and despair lie behind the individual radicalisation processes of young people? How can these efforts, and how can the needs and desires behind them, be channelled in other directions? These are resource and solution-orientated questions of a youth-focussed mindset.

Of course, it is also important to bear in mind that adolescents often do not (yet) have strong impulse and affect control, which can lead to an increased willingness to use violence. Reflection sessions and anonymised case discussions with educators and social workers from local youth welfare and anti-violence work may be helpful here.



Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- How did I manage to detach myself from my parents in my youth?
- In my youth, when did I first feel independent and what made me feel independent?
- In my youth, what adventures did I hope my life would give me? What would I have been prepared to do for such adventures?
- Which adults could I confide in during my youth? What qualities did these people have that enabled me as a young person to open up to them?

Political Awareness and Critical Reflection

The mindset of practitioners also requires an element of critical thinking in relation to the societal, political and interpersonal aspects that may have shaped the client's life path. These aspects may also serve (consciously or unconsciously) as a substantive reason for why they have joined a group that is hostile to democracy and humanity. Structural racism, anti-Muslim attitudes and other forms of discrimination and devaluation are decisive factors. Another factor is the strong contradictions and friction that often occur between a high social pressure to conform or be “normal” and the expectations of strongly conservative families of origin (cf. Baer 2017: 55f.). In addition, there are sometimes the specific effects of high pressure on individuals to perform well economically and narrowing opportunities for career development, which are particularly strongly felt by young people. A lack of experience of community and solidarity, subjective and objective social injustice and unfulfilled promises of equality can thus become an issue. “Socio-economic problems must not be psychologically personalised: the behaviour of a family of five in their two-room flat cannot be described as a ‘lack of’ the ability to tolerate frustration” (von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 201).



Acknowledging and contextualising racism and discrimination

Acknowledging experiences of racism and discrimination does not mean that practitioners justify clients who may have committed offences and their violent radicalised behaviour on the basis of the experiences they have had. As we all know, to understand is not the same as to justify. In individual cases, the client may also already have a strongly entrenched and generalised image of themselves as a victim of discrimination, which they use as an offensive justification for their individual radicalisation. The politically aware mindset, in this case, should also be critical and reflective. This allows the clients' patterns of justification and self-exculpation to be recognised and questioned, without denying the power relations and socio-economic factors of politically induced discrimination against certain client groups.

In the field of radicalisation prevention, different actors can be involved depending on the situation. To prevent radicalisation and extremism and to counter it by means of interventions, it is ultimately necessary for society as a whole to act and for the individuals involved, and for their roles and tasks, to be aligned accordingly. In addition to civil society organisations, counselling programmes, distancing programmes and exit programmes are also occasionally linked to state or security authority structures. The individual professions of the practitioners themselves can also have a decisive impact on the legal framework, such as the right to refuse to testify (→ 5.3). Practitioners can and should be aware of the different legal frameworks and be able to clearly communicate their own legal frameworks to their clients.

If, in certain individual cases, both practitioners from the area dealt with here are involved as well as representatives of other professions or authorities, it is all the more important for the practitioners to consciously and critically reflect on their own role and separation from the other actors. Other professions may include the youth welfare office or representatives of the security authorities, e.g. the police or the German Federal Criminal Police Office or the German State Bureau of Criminal Investigation. To the extent that it is necessary to interact with them, this must take place within a narrowly defined legal framework (→ 5.3). This must be reconciled with the overarching goal of distancing and deradicalisation, where the focus should be on working towards help and support for the individual client. The field of distancing and deradicalisation often combines a large number of relevant interfaces between security and health. Counsellors must reflect on these interfaces, be able to contextualise them

legally and always be conscious of their own role and mandate. Cooperation and collaboration must be firmly anchored, both structurally and locally. This is another reason why networking is often an important part of the practitioners' work.

Consequently, being critically reflective means being aware of and internalising one's own mindset when differentiating oneself from other professions and fields of activity which directly affect one's own area of work. It helps to reflect on the core elements of one's own training (e.g. as a social worker or social pedagogue) as well as on the associated technical and professional "ethical guidelines" (Oehlmann/Schurbohm 2021: 48) and to integrate the work areas of radicalisation prevention into this attitude. Not least, this means never losing sight of the idea of safety and at the same time being aware of the difference between the field of investigation and crime prevention and that of interpersonal counselling.



Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- What social or political milieus did I grow up in and what attitudes, e.g. towards the security authorities or the youth welfare office, have shaped me?
- In which milieus do my clients' lives take place? How do their experiences there relate to my political views?
- To what extent could the differences between my clients' social positions and my own characterise our relationship? What societal power relations are reflected in the relationship we have with each other?
- What is my main mission? How do different subject areas and other stakeholders affect my work? Who (else) can help me and my clients?

Cultural and Religious Sensitivity

An open and unbiased mindset with respect to culture and religion, accompanied by an awareness of one's own cultural influences and values is always part of the basic mindset of practitioners. It is important in order to be able to really reach

out to clients from all cultural and social groups. This impartiality goes hand in hand with the realisation that life can be shaped and managed in many different ways, and that it can unfold differently under the influence of social status, culture, ethnicity, nationality and religion, and is fundamentally an individual achievement that should be respected. This mindset is often associated with the term intercultural competence: "Intercultural competence is understood as the ability and willingness to self-reflect, empathise, be flexible and recognise diversity" (Gün 2018: 17).

In the context of the prevention of Islamism, religiously sensitive action is of particular importance. This is linked to a basic understanding of the nature of religiosity and spirituality and the individual needs associated with them. This can include dealing with the existential uncertainties of human beings as part of an inexplicable cosmos and believing in a higher, transcendent order. It is important to show general respect for all these individual needs for metaphysical meaning in life. A mindset of sensitivity to religion also includes recognising understandings of truth (which can be linked to these and other needs) as different ideas and beliefs, each of which has its own right to exist and its own resources.

However, sensitivity to religion also involves understanding the difference between the transcendent orders which people believe in on the one hand and the orders of worldly life and moral/ethical behaviour which are sometimes derived from them on the other. This does not affect people's fundamental right to lead a life in accordance with a religiously derived social and behavioural order. However, it requires that the rights of individuals and, in particular, those under protection be respected, just as the constitutional framework of democratic society must be. An important part of a successful religion-sensitive approach for a practitioner in the field of religiously motivated radicalisation is therefore to open up and examine the points of intersection between the belief in a transcendent order, a morally prescribed, socially specified order and the inviolable human rights of the individual. It may be important to work with the client to find out what individual personal needs they associate with the spiritual experience. It is also important to ask to what extent and in which situations religiosity constitutes a helpful and responsible resource for the person in question. However, it is also important to pay attention to whether spiritual needs and religious practices lead to difficulties or conflicts in the person's lifeworld and social activities – and, above all, whether the client is associated with groups or organisations which simply use religion as a legitimisation and recruitment strategy for political or violent action (→ 2.3).

A mindset of sensitivity to religion does not necessarily require counsellors to be religious themselves nor, in the case of "Islamism prevention", does it require them to be experts on Islam. At the same time, one's own religiosity or existing in-depth

knowledge can also be very helpful for successful casework. After all, in addition to cultural and linguistic misunderstandings, a number of religious misunderstandings can also occur. This is particularly the case when religious views are initially excluded from consideration, despite playing an important role (cf. Gün 2018). To maintain a mindset which is sensitive to religion in this counselling context, it is crucial to understand that Muslims in particular face a variety of conflicts in Germany – especially if they consciously live according to certain interpretations of Islam. This can, for example, concern the participation of boys and girls in mixed-sex swimming lessons and school trips lasting several days or the opportunity to attend Friday prayers during school or work. Laabdallaoui/Rüschhoff (2009: 51) emphasise that: "A practising Muslim often comes up against limits."

Specific knowledge of Islamic culture or religion can therefore also be helpful in counselling. In the context of physical or mental illnesses, for example, clients of Islamic origin "often have ideas about their illnesses and their treatment which are shaped by tradition/religion" (Gün 2018: 104). Such knowledge and the ability to talk about the topic can be crucial if, for example, traditional healers are favoured over medical or psychological therapy and this is initially kept secret (cf. *ibid.*).

A religion-sensitive mindset is not just important because it makes it easier to gain access to some clients, or to gain access at all. It is also possible that personal and professional exchanges between religious and non-religious colleagues represent an enrichment with regard to questions of contextualisation and assessment. For instance, they can allow a variety of perspectives to be brought to bear. Ultimately, however, the decisive factor – regardless of religion – is mindset skills which are relational and process-open. This enables practitioners to approach clients and their situation in an open-minded, interested, proactively enquiring and respectful manner. It is also important to become aware of one's own cultural and religious influences and to reflect on them. Case supervision and peer consultation can help you to develop and maintain this self-reflective and culturally and religiously sensitive attitude without losing the ability to question and confront clients if necessary.



Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:

- How do I feel about religion and spirituality? What personal experiences have I had in this regard?
.....
- Have I personally experienced spirituality as a helpful resource or do I know people who have been helped through crises in their lives by spirituality? What resources do I associate with spirituality?
.....
- Can I understand the fact that people define themselves

through spirituality? Is there a component to my identity which is particularly important to me? If so, has anyone ever managed to move me or hurt me deeply at this level of my identity? How did they manage to do this?

Gender and Diversity

Gender issues play an essential role in the ideologies and experiences involved with radicalisation. It is generally the case that movements which reject democracy are also sexist, misogynist, homophobic and transphobic and are characterised by restrictive gender roles (cf. WomEx 2022). Over the course of individual radicalisation, personal desires and conflicts linked to one's own subjective gender role are often a key motivating factor for joining a radical movement. Issues relating to being a woman or a man play a central role in these processes of turning, especially among younger people (cf. Baer/Weilnböck 2017). The specific ways in which gender is constructed and the gender labels applied to various ends in different social groups have a significant and often subtle impact on individuals (cf. *ibid.*).

It is therefore important that practitioners in radicalisation prevention develop a gender-conscious mindset for themselves, taking into account the influence of underlying concepts of masculinity and femininity when working with their clients. First of all, this includes reflecting on "the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities and risks at the biographical level over the course of life" (Gender Diversity Fachverband 2022), which apply to women and men in different sociocultural milieus. In this respect, a gender-conscious attitude is always sensitive to discrimination (→ 7.6), but is also diversity-conscious. This means that the specific mechanisms of marginalisation which may have affected a client are taken into account. At the same time, attention is paid to whether and to what extent the client themselves has a solid recognition of societal diversity (cf. *ibid.*).

In specific counselling situations, for example, it can then be a matter of discussing ideas that come to light about traditional role divisions based on somewhat romantic views about how young men and women should be and how they should relate to each other. In some cases, religiously based rules are also invoked, such as those practised by Salafists. These oblige them to separate the sexes "in the spirit of the Prophet". In other situations, the efforts of democratic societies to achieve greater

equality can become a topic if, for example, they are criticised or caricatured as "dishonest". During discussions of this topic, clients may refer to the continuing unequal treatment, the omnipresent sexualisation of women in public and the massive violence against women. Anti-democratic groups relentlessly address the internal contradictions of Western societies and the discrepancy between aspiration and reality. They counter this with a clear division of roles, claiming that it shows high regard for both men and women and is thus a better option (cf. Baer 2020). This may have been even more reason for clients to feel positively addressed by role models of male soldiers/warriors and "protected" motherly women in their turning toward a violent radicalised scene.

Accordingly, within Islamist ideology, especially that of Salafism and its followers, gender roles are clearly defined. On the basis of naturalistic patterns of argumentation, men and women are ascribed different characteristics and associated complementary responsibilities: "Thus men are by nature of strong physical strength and possess rational understanding and foresight, which enable them to lead and manage and protect the family. Women, on the other hand, are more emotional and sensitive, they are guided by their feelings and are more delicate" (Groeneveld et al. 2018: 15). According to this understanding, it is therefore the man's responsibility to provide for the family materially, to represent and protect it externally and to lead it internally. The woman, on the other hand, must take care of domestic well-being, above all the upbringing of the children (for details see *ibid.*: 15ff.). It is crucial here that practitioners are able to analyse their clients' very individual ideas about gender roles and the associated needs and individual ideas of justice. After all, it is often argued and emphasised that, although the genders are to be understood as complementary, they are equal before God within the hierarchy (cf. *ibid.*: 15). Teenagers and young adults, especially girls and young women, who have not had equal rights in their own families of origin can experience this kind of equality for the first time within the context of a religious system. Even the "brothers" within the group suddenly have to give up things like sex before marriage, for example. It is therefore possible that the clients have, within their own understanding of themselves, become "real feminists". A sensitive approach to individual perceptions of gender roles and the diverse underlying motivations and needs is therefore crucial. These can certainly be addressed and discussed during counselling. In all of this, practitioners on the one hand seek to maintain a mindset which allows them to address the issue in question adequately. And on the other hand, they focus – in a gender-conscious way – on the particular personal, gender-related needs and fears with which the client's ideas are associated.

For female clients in particular, it can be helpful to explore, in as much detail as possible, which promises of equality were not kept in their own path towards radicalisation or

which prerequisites for equality may have been subjectively perceived as frightening or overwhelming. Discrimination against Muslim women can be just as relevant as the aforementioned experiences of discrimination and objectification of women in mainstream society in general. Experiences of exclusion and discrimination can occur with regard to different social markers (e.g. skin colour, language, religion, gender, age, social origin, chronic illness or disability) or a combination of different markers (intersectionality). The various interconnections are sometimes quite complex and must be dealt with sensitively: for example, Muslim women can experience discrimination as women, as Muslims, or as Muslim women in particular. Equally, it is also possible that external assessments can result in incorrect interpretations. For example, it may turn out that the veil does not have a primarily religious meaning for a girl or a woman, but rather fulfils the practical and emotional function of offering protection from the various kinds of subtle sexualisation present in everyday life, as well as from assaults. A concealing veil can also serve as a relief from the often high social pressure of aesthetic body norms and beauty ideals. In proactive terms, joining a radical movement may also enable a young woman to gain a subjective sense of personal autonomy, self-efficacy and active involvement that was previously denied to her. It is therefore important that practitioners adopt an open and questioning mindset to possible motivations and interpretations of gender roles and related experiences.

When approaching certain clients the practitioners' own background can also be decisive for the counselling process and the extent to which it is easier – or more difficult, or even impossible – to build relationships and trust. Ultimately, the structural circumstances within the prevention and counselling centres, and to a large extent the clients themselves, determine with whom clients can and wish to work in a relationship of trust, and with whom this seems more difficult. Young women who have repeatedly experienced sexualised violence and are looking for a safe place and support in the "sisterhood" may find it more difficult to have a trusting working relationship with a man. On the other hand, such a situation can also help the client to revise their image of men in general if the client realises that the male practitioner has a completely different attitude towards her than that which she has come to expect. Case supervisions (→ 8) should therefore also take the specific combinations of gender, age, origin, etc. into consideration and critically reflect on them.

Questions for practitioners to reflect upon:



- What gender and role concepts did I grow up with? Do I consider these positive or negative for myself and why?
- What challenges, but also opportunities, arise when

counsellors and clients differ in terms of sex and gender?

- Which topics do I find it more difficult to discuss with a person of the opposite sex?

Summary

The diversity and complexity of attitudes in counselling in the field of radicalisation prevention makes it clear how great the corresponding challenges for continued training and further education are. Essentially, each core skill requires dedicated attention and also time for reflection and practice if it is to be developed and strengthened during the course of continued training. In addition, some of the aspects are also associated with certain methodological resources. They are therefore discussed in detail later in the chapter on session topics (→ 7).

A common element of all core skills within the counselling mindset is that counselling is understood as “relationship-orientated, interpersonal” work with clients towards the goal of “sustainable personal development”. As professional relationship work, counselling is based on trust, voluntary participation, self-motivation and confidentiality. It is about engaging in a process that is open in terms of content and outcome. The basic mindset of counselling in the prevention of radicalisation is therefore fully in line with a humanistic view of humanity as well as a correspondingly functional concept of society, in terms of human rights and democracy, the preservation and protection of which is its primary purpose.

Notes:

- A self-reflective mindset in which practitioners consciously examine their own professional and personal life experiences and know how to contextualise them is essential for the entire counselling process.
- A relationship-orientated approach to counselling is based on confidentiality and helps to build the necessary trust in the counselling process.
- Different core skills within the practitioner’s mindset are crucial for a successful counselling process. The aim is not to find a supposedly “perfect” mindset, but to constantly reflect and develop in a two-way process.

Preparation and Legal Framework

Alexander Gesing

A professional approach to a future counselling case involves good preparation. For counsellors working in advice centres, this task does not usually take up much space in their day-to-day schedule. It is, nevertheless, worth looking at what practitioners of social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling should already have prepared in the run-up to a counselling session in the context of religiously motivated extremism. Much of this preparation consists of the counselling itself. After all, it is almost impossible to predict in advance what the topics of a counselling session will be and how it will proceed. However, those things that make a normal conversation between two people a counselling session in the context of social environment counselling, distancing counselling or exit counselling can certainly be established in advance. Furthermore, preparation, including everything addressed in this chapter, is part of what makes practitioners professionals. The following section therefore presents important aspects which are relevant during counselling, but which are also useful or even necessary to bear in mind beforehand, because the preparation has substantial influence on a counselling session. The chapter is divided into sections on explicit preparation for counselling (→ 5.1), implicit knowledge for such preparation (→ 5.2) and the legal framework (→ 5.3).

Explicit Preparation

Explicit preparation for counselling refers to preparation at the specific level of action. It is about which different target groups the counselling centre in question may be focussing on, how the clients can be reached and what existing information may be available beforehand. In addition, there is the question of how the setting can be organised, how an initial contact session or counselling session can be documented and which actors can be, or could become, involved in the case (cf. also Dantschke 2021: 68).

Case access and reaching the target group

The target groups of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention,¹⁶ i.e. of work in social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling, can be visualised as a pyramid. At the lowest level, a broad target group is served. This group receives support in the prevention of extremism in the sense of universal or primary prevention. This essentially means promoting factors which encourage resilience. In contrast, secondary prevention programmes are focussed on smaller target groups, and tertiary prevention programmes even more so.

One challenge which should not be underestimated is that of reaching the target group in distancing work, as the number of cases in which someone is seeking exit counselling or where those in their social environment get in contact is even lower. The various counselling centres have developed different methods for reaching those seeking counselling in the area of distancing and exit work or of reaching their family members. The most common method is to operate a hotline, i.e. to set up a local, state-wide or nationwide telephone number for those seeking advice. These people may be seeking exit support for themselves, or they may have concerns about the radicalisation of people in their social environment. Other methods can include publicity work, such as interviews, the creation of handouts and flyers, websites or poster campaigns. Depending on the resources and possibilities of the various counselling services, it is also possible to approach people directly in social spaces or in coercive contexts such as prisons.

However, it is not yet clear whether access to a case can be created with an initial contact. Access to a case can only be established by building a working relationship which is characterised by trust. What is decisive here is that those

¹⁶ Primary prevention begins even before radicalisation occurs and aims to raise awareness (e.g. through political education). Secondary prevention involves working with people who are already inclined towards extremist ideologies and preventing those ideologies from becoming entrenched. Tertiary prevention takes place in the context of exit processes and distancing processes.

seeking advice are aware of the benefits of working together and that they see the counsellors as competent to work on their issues with them (cf. Gesing 2023 for more details).

Target group(s)

Depending on the focus of the counselling centre, a wide variety of people can come for counselling. The mandates of the counselling centres can differ to some extent. Counselling centres need to tailor their communications in accordance with the target groups they seek to address. In general, within the context of the work carried out by counselling centres, a distinction is made between counselling for those who are primarily affected and for those who are secondarily affected (cf. BAMF/VPN 2020).



Primarily affected person: index client

While every person seeking counselling is initially understood as a client, the term index client refers to the person who is (presumed to be) primarily threatened or affected by radicalisation and who is in a process of moving towards or away from the extremist spectrum. This can be the individual visiting the counselling centre or asking for counselling. The index client can, however, also be the subject of conversations with clients who are secondarily affected. Examples of primarily affected people who are directly involved in the work include:

- A young woman who returned to Germany with her child from the area of the former "Islamic State" and visited a counselling centre before her arrival.
- An adolescent who decides to speak to a counsellor at the counselling centre herself after watching her first video with Salafist content and talking to the caregiver at the residential group where she lives.
- A man who decides to look for support after experiencing his first difficulties within the radical scene, which he has been part of for a while.
- A boy who has repeatedly attended a mosque which is known to the counselling centre as being Salafi in character, and with whom personal contact was established following several counselling sessions with his parents.

The mandates which arise in the counselling sessions very much depend on the index clients and their individual situation.

People who have returned from a war zone generally face different challenges to those faced by young people who may be confronted with Islamist programmes for the first time.



Secondarily affected person: client

In this context, clients are people who are (presumed to be) secondarily threatened or affected by radicalisation. They are therefore part of the social environment of people who may be in the process of radicalisation. They are generally the first to notice a change once a primarily affected person has turned to Islamist understandings of the world. Typically, parents or teachers are the first to contact the counselling centres and ask for advice regarding the perceived change in their children or pupils. Examples of clients who are secondarily affected are:

- A teacher who is concerned about a pupil who aggressively reminds other pupils before and/or during Ramadan that they must observe the fast.
- A mother whose son, after converting to Islam, isolates himself from her on the grounds that she is not a believer and criticises her sinful behaviour.

In addition to the differentiation between those who are primarily affected and those who are secondarily affected (index clients and clients), different clients pose different challenges when it comes to reaching the target group (cf. Gesing 2023 for details). It is generally the case that: people who have a problem which they want to solve together with the counselling centre or who consider the practitioners to be capable of finding a (joint) solution to the problem are easier for practitioners to reach. This means that the person they are counselling perceives the practitioners as part of the solution or at least as part of the path to a solution.

Greater challenges in terms of accessibility may also be due to mental illness among clients and index clients. Severe depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder or schizophrenia can affect those seeking advice to such an extent that normal, regular contact is difficult. In some of these cases, further counselling or contact can be maintained via their broader social environment. In other cases, stabilising work is needed first, for example by psychotherapists, in order to be able to start distancing counselling in the first place.¹⁷ In the course of this, it may still be possible for the practitioners to continue working with those affected, to provide supportive advice to those in their social environment or to support psychotherapists with their expert advice. For many psychotherapists it is often their first

¹⁷ In other cases, social workers first need to stabilise the client's life situation in order to create the conditions for the client to be able to make use of the therapy.

time working with clients in this area. Other challenges include cases in which the counselling centre or the counsellors are rejected, for example for ideological reasons. In these cases too, it is often still possible to provide further advice via the social environment. In addition, a counselling centre would do well to repeatedly check how much preparation is needed before counselling is embarked upon.



Questions about reaching the target group to reflect upon

1. What hurdles need to be overcome in order for initial contact with the advice centre to be made?
2. Which target group(s) does the advice centre address?
3. Is there any way in which the profile of the counselling centre, represented by the management and the counsellors, has a stigmatising or discriminatory character?

The counselling setting

In reality, what initially appears to be a rigid plan could not be more varied: the counselling setting. The setting is very important for the preparation of a counselling session. This is because different counselling circumstances can have consequences for the participants, the process, the rules of the conversation and the outcome of the counselling. The setting is influenced by the clients, the practitioners, the counselling centre and the specifics of the case and is as diverse as the clients themselves are. Sometimes it is possible to spend a long time covering a topic in detail together. At other times, there are hectic phone calls, crisis conversations, contact via handwritten letters (e.g. from prison) or, influenced by the coronavirus pandemic, conversations had during long walks or via online video platforms.

The counselling standards, which were developed together with practitioners from the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees network, make a fundamental distinction between general information sessions, one-off counselling sessions, issues for clarification and counselling cases (cf. BAMF/VPN 2020). The following classification provides an overview of what is meant in each case:

During the *initial counselling session* counsellors and clients meet for the first time. They may have had contact by telephone or in some other way before. This is where it becomes clear which of the four aforementioned focal points the meeting and any subsequent meetings will have. The initial meeting is characterised by getting to know each other, a preliminary discussion of the reasons for visiting the counselling centre and an appraisal of the situation by both parties. On the basis

of the initial meeting, the clients decide whether they will continue the counselling with further meetings. Following the initial meeting, the counsellors will then make an initial assessment of the specifics of the case, which they will share with those seeking advice in a preliminary form.

General information session A general information session is a counselling session about general topics, e.g. about Salafism or radicalisation, involving no personal information or issues. The aim is to satisfy an abstract need for knowledge.	Issues for clarification An issue for clarification is a personal issue involving potential for or as yet unverified radicalisation. It is subjected to a further evaluation with regard to possible radicalisation. Subsequently, the findings may lead to the therapy being continued or to it being concluded as a one-off counselling session, as it is deemed that there is no need for any further work.
One-off counselling session A one-off counselling session is person-specific or group-specific and involves no further work being carried out, as a) the concern the counselling was intended to address has, in the opinion of both parties, been adequately addressed during the session. b) there is a possible risk of radicalisation, but there is no further need for counselling and no signs of danger to self and/or others. c) the counselling took place simply due to a security-relevant situation being reported. d) based on the information presented during the session, no radicalisation tendencies in the area of Islamist-motivated extremism can be discerned.	Counselling case A (counselling) case is a personal situation which is assessed as a radicalisation incident or for which a concrete risk of radicalisation is observed and for which there is a current or future need for work to be done. If work does need to be carried out, one or more measures will be initiated and implemented (counselling, intervention, involvement of the security authorities).

Table 1: Different forms of counselling session (cf. BAMF/VPN 2020: 17)

Another essential part of the initial meeting is for the practitioner to introduce the counselling centre and the counselling context. The practitioners talk about themselves and their background, explain the duty of confidentiality and exceptions to this duty, the services offered by the counselling centre and the modalities of counselling as well as possible prerequisites. Where applicable, they also clarify that there is no such thing as a right to refuse to testify (→ 5.3). The responsibilities in the case are discussed, as is proximity to or distance from the security authorities and the different mandates. The counsellors also provide information on when and how cooperation with other actors, e.g. the security authorities or child and youth welfare professionals, can be established. It is possible that exemptions from the duty of confidentiality (→ 5.3) have already been applied at this point with respect to relevant partners. The time frame for the meeting, e.g. one hour, is usually also determined in advance.

Crisis meetings are used to discuss crises, especially those perceived by the clients. However, they can also be convened by people from the support network, such as employees from youth welfare services or the justice system's mobile social services. As a rule, a counselling session should be held very promptly in such cases, as there is a need for action to be taken.

Support plan discussions or meetings with the security authorities are usually prepared together with the clients. Clients rarely perceive these discussions/meetings as pleasant and often associate them with stress and worry or even the need to defend themselves.

In the prison context, the setting of counselling sessions is something practitioners have little influence over. Generally, neither the facilities nor the time frame can be freely chosen. Especially during pre-trial detention, police officers can be expected to attend the meetings.

Counselling sessions carried out by telephone or video call have become increasingly common, especially since the coronavirus pandemic, but these cannot replace face-to-face counselling sessions. It is precisely because the participants in the dialogue are unable to see each other properly that it is difficult to build trust and make an assessment of each other. In some cases, however, it is possible that at the beginning of a counselling session, clients only want to stay in contact with the counsellor by telephone, or that there is no other option. For example, some refuse an in-person meeting out of mistrust, some want to keep the counselling secret from relatives and some get in contact because they are planning to return to Germany from a war zone.

In the case of those seeking advice who turn to a counselling centre in the context of religiously motivated extremism, this may be for reasons that make it necessary to provide them with a particularly well-protected place for counselling to take place. During counselling, they may be confronted with particularly

stressful relationships or experiences in their lives, they may feel very ashamed and they may be nervous or very worried. For the purposes of counselling, it can therefore be particularly important to determine a location where the person seeking advice feels safe beforehand. Many of those seeking advice invite the practitioners into their own homes. This is where they feel protected and are best able to deal with challenging emotions. For others, a neutral location or the premises of the counselling centre are more important. Practitioners are generally well advised to accommodate the wishes of those seeking advice, provided it is feasible for them. A crowded café in the city centre may be a neutral and relatively anonymous place, but it is neither quiet nor free of distractions. On the other hand, in some cases, the personal safety of the practitioner may become a consideration when entering the client's home. Overall, it can be helpful in counselling to address the counselling setting during the meeting. If possible, practitioners can then also state the requirements, such as a protected and confidential atmosphere.

A counselling room in the counselling centre should be designed to provide a quiet, trusting and protected environment. An open, bright atmosphere, a cosy seating area in part of the room and, ideally, enough space for possible methodological approaches such as charts, sculpture work or simply space for movement during a counselling session provide both those seeking advice and practitioners with a good setting. Sufficiently thick walls and doors which help to keep conversations private are also important. It can be helpful for the institution to try to see things from the perspective of those seeking advice or, if possible, to ask them about their impressions of the room.

Counselling centres in the field of exit counselling emphasise that their counselling is always provided on a voluntary basis. They do not exert any pressure on those seeking advice to begin counselling or to continue with it. However, some counselling centres also work in explicitly coercive contexts, e.g. in cases where meetings with an exit counsellor have been formulated as a condition imposed by the courts. In addition, as in youth welfare services, counselling is provided in cases where there is no official coercive context, but where there could be consequences if clients fail to cooperate appropriately with counselling centres or youth welfare services. This may be the case in contexts in which the failure to make use of counselling is perceived as unacceptable, e.g. due to consequences involving school or the youth welfare office.

The emphasis on the voluntary nature of counselling by the counselling centres is therefore of great importance, as this is the only way to guarantee that clients actually want to engage with the counselling centres and have an intrinsic motivation to take advantage of the counselling. Counselling in a context of coercion can, it is assumed, lead to an internal defensive attitude towards exit counselling and thus have unintended effects. It can, however, also help to establish access in the first

place, i.e. a counselling relationship based on a low level of trust. In certain cases, this initiation of counselling can then create the intrinsic motivation needed to continue with counselling.

The counselling centres themselves determine whether counselling is to be carried out by just one practitioner or by two. Apart from very pragmatic reasons ("Who still has capacity?"), the justification for choosing one option over the other is based on the experience of the counselling centres in the field. Counselling with two practitioners can have the advantage that the counsellors' (sometimes deliberate) heterogeneity expands the possibilities available within counselling. They gain more impressions, they can take turns and help each other and, ultimately, the practitioners themselves will be safer. In some cases, however, the client may perceive counselling by two practitioners as less intimate, or even as overwhelming. Nevertheless, the aforementioned advantages can still be integrated into counselling carried out by just one practitioner as part of the interdisciplinary preparation which takes place in the run-up to the counselling. By doing this, for example in a format similar to intervision, colleagues from other disciplines can analyse the case with the practitioner in depth, thus providing new input for the counselling which the practitioner was previously unaware of. If two practitioners are actively involved, they should prepare for the counselling session together. Generally speaking, the more counselling sessions they have already had together, the shorter the joint preparation time. Sometimes the time spent driving to the location together can be used for a preliminary discussion of the counselling case in question.

Clarifying the task

Even though this book contains a separate chapter on methodically approaching the process of clarifying tasks during a counselling session (→ 7.1), the clarification of tasks should be briefly outlined here in the context of preparing for a consultation. This is because it constitutes a core component.

It is worth bearing in mind that there will probably be several tasks which are implicitly or explicitly given to the practitioner over the course of the subsequent counselling. It would, however, be pointless to formulate the possible tasks at this stage. When preparing for counselling, it is more important to develop ways to make tasks clearer so that they can then be addressed and worked on during the counselling session.

Counselling tasks are true chameleons. They are sometimes easy to recognise, for example when they are uttered or written down, or mentioned during the first telephone call, or at the beginning of the first counselling session. They can then also be forcefully expressed or formulated as a question: "Can you actually recover the items I have had confiscated too?" or "Can you explain the letter from the authorities to me?". Maybe

the clients express their desire for the practitioner to “have a chat with their son” or “come along to the next appointment at the immigration office”. However, assignments can also be very well disguised. For example, they may be wrapped up in circumlocutions, accusations or complaints. An agitated account of the many conflicts within the family may then include the desire to develop solutions together in counselling in order to defuse the relationship with relatives again.

Ultimately, the basic task given to the counsellors is to help with the concerns brought to the counselling session. From a professional ethics perspective, one task is to show those seeking counselling the framework within which expectations and tasks can be presented to the practitioner. This can be done beforehand and, if required, through ongoing information sharing and education. For practitioners, this means being clear about their own professional possibilities and limits, whilst also being aware of their own role (→ 4), and communicating these as required (and doing so considerately).

Practitioners can use the triple mandate of social work as a guide for identifying their tasks and divide the mandates they carry out into three mandate groups: help for the benefit of the clients, acting on behalf of society and the professional component (→ 4.7). In practice, this results in a dense mesh of tasks with varying aspects, complexity and duration.



The triple mandate of social work in the context of social environment work, distancing work and exit work in the area of religiously motivated extremism

1. Help for the benefit of the clients:

Recording, selecting, accepting and jointly working on the tasks and concerns which those seeking advice bring to the counselling.

2. Acting on behalf of society:

Acting for a democratically orientated society, for the free and democratic basic order and for tolerance and diversity. But also: awareness and intervention when certain boundaries are reached, e.g. resulting from the duty to report in Section 138 German Criminal Code (→ 5.3) or the duty to protect in accordance with Section 8a German Social Code VIII (→ 5.3).

3. Professionalism:

The mandate from one's own specialist discipline to adhere to the standards developed from science and

practice for one's own profession, e.g. the standards and findings of the civil society partner counselling centres of the Advice Centre on Radicalisation.

Documentation of the counselling

Social work often involves documenting activities – this is no different in the counselling centres which work in the area of religiously motivated extremism. Even if the documentation is primarily to be understood as a follow-up to a counselling session, it can also serve as helpful preparation for subsequent meetings. This is also important, for example, if there is a change of practitioners for whatever reason. When preparing for the counselling session, it is therefore useful to have something to write with so that you can take notes about anything important. Furthermore, it is also sometimes helpful to prepare questions which are not only relevant for later documentation, but also for the assessment of the case.

Documentation is useful for several reasons. First of all, it serves as proof of the practitioner's activities and thus the purpose for which the counselling centre was given the task. Advice centres can thus summarise for themselves or for their sponsors, how their work is structured. Interim reports can also be produced, or the data collected can support a counselling centre's own research work.

In general, an internal distinction can be made between the counselling centre's documentation and the individual practitioners' documentation. The latter in particular document the practitioners' counselling cases, i.e. progress, individual appointments, assessments or documents relating to the case. The documentation is usually in writing, but photographs, videos, internet links, social media pages, media reports or chats can also play a role. It is also possible for documents to be saved for documentation purposes, e.g. court documents or correspondence from and with the authorities. This can mean that the documentation of a case sometimes becomes very extensive.

Counsellors also contribute to the case statistics of the counselling centre or the entire agency. This includes key data at a higher level than the documentation of individual cases and is used for the internal statistics of the counselling centre or agency. For example, the number of cases and one-off sessions for clarification and information purposes, the place of residence, the age of the index client, imprisonment or criminal proceedings where relevant and risk assessments are all recorded in the documentation. Finally, the statistics can be used for internal questions or research collaboration, to the extent that data protection law allows.

The documentation also serves to protect the employees of the counselling centre from accusations of misconduct,

including misconduct of a criminal nature. This is because the documentation can be used to counter a possible accusation by presenting a record of past activity. Furthermore, it also gives the practitioners a good overview of the case. They can use the documentation to prepare for subsequent sessions or to answer longitudinal questions (“How has the relationship between the client and mother changed during the counselling process?”) and cross-sectional questions (within a case: “What expectations do the different parties within a case have of me as a practitioner?”; across different cases: “How is the topic of violence discussed in different cases?”). It also means that practitioners have the option of having all the people and institutions relevant to a case quickly to hand. During the counselling itself, the documentation can also be used to review what has been achieved with the client so far and to identify together what still needs to be worked on.

Documentation can also help the practitioners themselves to (critically) reflect on the case, a specific date or period, or a specific behaviour. This process of reflection can already begin during documentation when writing and thinking about how to word things. In this respect, documentation also has an important function in the professional processing of a counselling appointment. The aim is to introduce anonymised presentations into intervention or supervision sessions.

The type of documentation can be roughly divided into process evaluation and documentation of outcomes. In the latter case, only the result of a counselling appointment, e.g. a joint meeting with a debt advice service, is documented. In contrast to process evaluation, what counts here is the outcome of the meeting rather than the description of the path taken during a counselling session, e.g. the client’s biography. During documentation, practitioners should also distinguish between objective descriptions of facts and subjective perceptions.

Each counselling centre has its own practice when it comes to documentation. From simple Word documents to complex software, everything gets used. However, it should be borne in mind that the clients must be granted access to the documentation in accordance with the right to informational self-determination. This should also always be remembered when taking minutes.

Self-care

Practitioners in the field of religiously motivated extremism often face great challenges in their work. These can result in heavy emotional and physical burdens for them. Within the field of social professions as a whole, they are not the only ones to experience this. The fact that in some of these fields of activity the stress can become so significant that it has an impact on emotional stability, on the perception of stress or on other areas of people’s professional and private lives has

led to the realisation that professional tools for self-care need to be developed in these fields too. Nevertheless, this aspect still appears to receive rather marginal consideration. Many counselling centres address this issue by hiring supervisors (cf. Nelle 2021 for more details). The aim of supervision is to create a space in which professional burdens can be discussed and solutions developed. For those in social work, establishing a professional combination of proximity and distance in the relationships involved with their cases is also an excellent way of maintaining professional distance from cases in emotional terms whilst still acting with empathy and compassion.

An awareness of self-care exercises gives practitioners two advantages. Apart from the practitioners being able to use them themselves, in certain cases the exercises can also be helpful for those seeking advice. It would therefore make sense for practitioners to pass on or even provide instruction in these exercises. Whether they are appropriate, however, must be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Implicit Knowledge

Implicit knowledge refers to the professional knowledge that practitioners have gathered and thus learnt in preparation for their professional role in order to be capable counsellors. It covers the understanding of roles within a case and the different combinations of power imbalances which can arise. Both of these aspects are discussed in more detail below.

The understanding of roles within a case

When preparing for a counselling session, it can be helpful for practitioners to gain an insight into their own understanding of their role in counselling (→ 4). This refers to the individual role of each practitioner, which is the result of their mindset, their understanding of their profession and their own (critical) reflection on things. The practitioners ask themselves questions such as:

- Who am I as a counsellor?
.....
- Who am I not in my role as a counsellor?
.....
- What can I achieve as a counsellor and what can I not achieve?
.....
- What can be expected of me? And what can’t?
.....
- What can I achieve and what can I not?
.....

This is always done by addressing the expectations they have of their role, but also their rights, duties and self-image as a practitioner in this field, as well as professional ethics and many other things. By clearly defining their role, practitioners can act with confidence in the counselling session and curb unfulfillable or unrealistic expectations. The role does not have to have rigid boundaries; sometimes the current role needs to be adapted so that it fits the current case. This particularly depends on the differences among those seeking advice. Even when staying within the professional framework, a practitioner may behave differently towards a mother of pensionable age than towards an adolescent who fled to Germany four years ago.

With regard to the field of action focussed on here, it should be emphasised that the practitioners are professionals from various disciplines who support disengagement from Islamist-orientated ideas, beliefs or values which stand in contrast to the free democratic basic order, or who help to prevent (further) engagement. They offer assistance in reintegration and support the critical review of past decisions which were associated with a move towards or away from Salafist and Islamist-orientated values. To this end, knowledge of different specialist disciplines as well as experience, a certain mindset and counselling methods are used. It is important to recognise where one's own skills as described above end and where the skills and fields of work of other specialist disciplines such as psychotherapy, the police, child and youth welfare or other areas of social work begin.

It is important to be aware of these adjoining areas of expertise and of the organisation of the regulatory structures of child and youth welfare, social welfare and support on the jobs market. Equally, it is important to be able to assess when clients need to have access to additional contacts. However, practitioners cannot possibly know everything. Lack of knowledge should not be glossed over; instead, if there is an issue where you don't feel confident to express a view, it is better to acknowledge that you need more knowledge. This lends credibility, as covering up ignorance comes across as inauthentic and incompetent, whereas clearly stating gaps or limitations in knowledge comes across as authentic, approachable and trustworthy.

Power in counselling

One aspect that practitioners have to deal with is the power imbalance in counselling. This does not apply exclusively to counselling in the context of social environment work, distancing work and exit work – but this kind of work is characterised by a few special features when it comes to the aspect of power. A professional counselling relationship always results in certain complex power imbalances, no matter how much it is based on equality. Usually, counselling is voluntary, meaning that most people who seek counselling make the decision to do so themselves. However, an imbalance can also arise from

other dimensions of the situation. These imbalances can be professional, e.g. imbalances in knowledge and experience, but they can also be emotional, e.g. dependencies. Certain aspects sometimes lead to differences in knowledge and therefore require dedicated reflection. Key examples of this are aspects such as formal educational qualifications or non-formal education, life history and the associated (ascribed) religious affiliations or histories of migration. Valuing the resulting knowledge and experience gained by the clients as a resource, if appropriate, can – in addition to enriching the practitioner's own mindset (→ 4) – facilitate authentic counselling relationships based on mutual respect. In the area of social environment counselling, distancing counselling and exit counselling, this knowledge and experience result from very different causes – be it differences in formal educational qualifications or non-formal education, life history and the associated ascribed religious affiliations or histories of migration. Further inequalities may result from differences in knowledge between clients and practitioners, but also from the distress of the clients, which can lead to a kind of dependence on the practitioners. Ultimately, the inequalities can also result from the decision-making power of the practitioners as they can classify cases as being security-relevant and, in the event of any doubts, they can decide to involve the security authorities or the youth welfare office. Many clients are aware of these power imbalances, especially those who have often experienced discriminatory practices over the course of their lives. However, these differences in power are often not openly discussed, but are instead coded during counselling sessions in terms of reservation, mistrust, questions or reinterpretations. Power differences can be used in other ways, and some clients may make use of them by transferring their responsibility for changing their situation to the practitioners.

The power imbalance can (understandably) have an unfavourable influence on the counselling relationship, but practitioners can neither deny nor eliminate it. However, they can self-reflectively ensure that they work towards reducing the power imbalance by complying with counselling standards (cf. BAMF/VPN 2020). On the one hand, the possibilities of an abuse of power are limited by following the standards, e.g. if practitioners have a clear catalogue of criteria which they use as a guide when it comes to involving the security authorities. On the other, clients are also empowered to stand up for themselves through efforts to achieve the greatest possible transparency and information about their rights. In addition, being orientated towards the subject allows practitioners to adopt a position which helps them to see the individuality of their clients' lifeworld and their possibilities instead of perceiving them as objects to be changed from the outside. Such a mindset can be felt by the clients during counselling and has a positive effect on the power imbalance in this context. Counsellors can address the topic of power imbalances in preparation for the counselling

session not only immediately beforehand, but also as a team task during the counselling session, making such imbalances a topic for discussion.



Exercise: Packing the “counselling suitcase”

To prepare for possible counselling situations, it can be helpful to “pack a suitcase” for counselling. Think about what things you would take with you in a real suitcase or backpack, e.g. the address of the counselling location, writing implements or tissues. In addition, open your virtual counselling suitcase and put in everything you will need to bear in mind during the consultation. This could include the philosophy of your institution or your self-image as a counsellor, but also specific knowledge about the area in question, legal obligations in counselling or different methods which can be used. It can also be helpful to write down this virtual kit as a list and look at it briefly before a counselling session. There is often not much time before a session, but a quick check of the “counselling kit” can sometimes make it easier to find your way into the role of a professional counsellor.

Legal Framework

Practitioners should be familiar with the relevant legal framework before they start counselling. In addition to general knowledge of freedom of religion (Article 4 German Basic Law), freedom of opinion (Article 5 German Basic Law), freedom of education (Article 6 German Basic Law) and their limits, certain areas of law may become more important depending on the case. These include, in particular, asylum law, criminal law and social law (especially the German Social Code Book VIII) and the Law on Cooperation and Information in Child Protection. Confidentiality and data protection are particularly important cornerstones for practitioners and their counselling clients. All of these legal aspects are discussed in more detail below.



Article 4 German Basic Law: freedom of religion

- (1) Freedom of faith and of conscience and freedom to profess a religious or philosophical creed shall be inviolable.
- (2) The undisturbed practice of religion shall be guaranteed.
- (3) No person shall be compelled against his conscience to render military service involving the use of arms. Details shall be regulated by a federal law.



Article 5 German Basic Law: freedom of expression

- (1) Every person shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinions in speech, writing and pictures and to inform himself without hindrance from generally accessible sources. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by means of broadcasts and films shall be guaranteed. There shall be no censorship.
- (2) These rights shall find their limits in the provisions of general laws, in provisions for the protection of young persons and in the right to personal honour.
- (3) Arts and sciences, research and teaching shall be free. The freedom of teaching shall not release any person from allegiance to the constitution.



Article 6 German Basic Law: freedom of education

- (1) Marriage and the family shall enjoy the special protection of the state.
- (2) The care and upbringing of children is the natural right of parents and a duty primarily incumbent upon them. The state shall watch over them in the performance of this duty.
- (3) Children may be separated from their families against the will of their parents or guardians only pursuant to a law and only if the parents or

guardians fail in their duties or the children are otherwise in danger of serious neglect.

(4) Every mother shall be entitled to the protection and care of the community.

(5) Children born outside marriage shall be provided by legislation with the same opportunities for physical and mental development and for their position in society as are enjoyed by those born within marriage.

The obligation to safeguard the protection of personal data, the main features of which are described below, must also always be coordinated with the data protection officers of the organisations involved. Further information on the duty of confidentiality and on data protection – including their limits and exceptions – can be found in the guidelines on the powers and obligations of civil society advice centres to provide information (“Bund-Länder-Leitfaden zu den Übermittlungsbefugnissen und -pflichten der Beratungsfachkräfte und zivilgesellschaftlichen Akteure im Arbeitsfeld Deradikalisierungs-/Distanzierungsarbeit”, widely referred to as the “Übermittlungsleitfaden” or “reporting guidelines”¹⁸).

Before the counselling session, the counsellors must be aware of the narrow limits under which data may be passed on to third parties. As part of the preparation for the counselling session, it could also be useful to define how the duty of confidentiality and its limits can be described to the clients in relation to their counselling. It is also helpful to take forms for data processing consent and, if applicable, forms for the release from the duty of confidentiality with you to the counselling session.

Duty of confidentiality

The duty of confidentiality is derived in particular from Section 203 German Criminal Code (“Violation of private secrets”). It is based on the right to informational self-determination. Every person is free to decide which details of their personal life they wish to disclose.

When people turn to a counselling centre for help and support in a personal situation, they are often forced to disclose private information. Over the course of counselling, the professional is obliged to protect the right to informational self-determination and not to violate these private secrets: the duty of confidentiality arises. Section 203 of the German Criminal Code names certain professional groups, such as doctors, lawyers and social workers, who frequently have to deal with such particularly sensitive personal information as a result of their professional practice. However, there are

¹⁸ The Übermittlungsleitfaden is not publicly accessible (classified information).

counsellors in the field of religiously motivated extremism who have degrees in disciplines which are not covered by the legal duty of confidentiality. These counsellors are therefore not liable to prosecution under Section 203 of the German Criminal Code. They are, nevertheless, obliged by data protection law and, where they apply, employment contract provisions to maintain confidentiality regarding the content of counselling sessions; if a breach does occur, it simply has other legal consequences.

However, counsellors can be released from their duty of confidentiality by the person seeking advice on specific occasions and topics and in relation to specific persons or institutions with the consent of the person concerned (until revoked). Furthermore, there are legal obligations and/or authorisations which require individual aspects of the facts to be disclosed to certain institutions under strict conditions. The counsellors are then authorised to speak to certain third parties and institutions about the case in question.

The duty of confidentiality under criminal law also applies when speaking to other colleagues at the counselling centre. When talking to colleagues about a case, this must be in anonymised form or with the client’s consent. When counselling relatives, where the person concerned is not part of the counselling, it is often not possible to obtain consent for the disclosure of private data. In this case, the counsellors have to continue their work within the scope of the possibilities available. Exceptions to the duty of confidentiality apply in particular in those cases where the disclosure of otherwise protected information protects other people and their rights. This is the case, for example, with the duty of disclosure (Section 138 of the German Criminal Code) or in the context of child protection (Section 4 Law on Cooperation and Information in Child Protection).



Section 138 German Criminal Code: failure to report planned offences

(1) Whoever has credible information about the planning or the commission of [...] 5. murder under specific aggravating circumstances (Section 211) or murder (Section 212) or genocide (Section 6 Code of Crimes against International Law (CCAIL)) or a crime against humanity (Section 7 CCAIL) or a war crime (Sections 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 CCAIL) or a crime of aggression (Section 13 CCAIL), 6. an offence against personal liberty in the cases under Section 232 (3) sentence 2, Section 232a (3), (4) and (5), Section 232b (3) or (4), Section 233a (3) or (4), in each case to the extent that it constitutes a serious criminal offence, under Section 234, 234a, 239a or 239b, [...] at a time when

the commission of the crime, or its success, can still be prevented and fails to report it in time to the public authorities or to the person threatened incurs a penalty of imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or a fine.

(2) Whoever credibly learns 1. of the commission of an offence under Section 89a or 2. of the planning or commission of an offence under Section 129a, also in conjunction with Section 129b (1) sentences 1 and 2, at a time when the commission can still be prevented and fails to report it without delay to the public authorities incurs the same penalty. Section 129b (1) sentences 3 to 5 applies accordingly in the case under no. 2.

(3) Whoever recklessly fails to make a report despite having credible information about the planning or the commission of an unlawful act incurs a penalty of imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or a fine. [...]

①

Section 4 Law on Cooperation and Information in Child Protection: counselling and transmission of information by secret bearers in the case of child welfare

(1) If [...] 2. professional psychologists with a state-recognised academic qualification, 3. marriage counsellors, family counsellors, educational or youth counsellors and 4. counsellors for addiction issues in a counselling centre that is recognised by an authority or corporation, institution or foundation under public law, [...] 6. state-recognised social workers or state-recognised social education workers or 7. [...] in the course of their professional activities, become aware of significant indications that the welfare of a child or young person is at risk, they should discuss the situation with the child or young person and their legal guardians and, if necessary, work with the legal guardians to obtain help, provided that this does not jeopardise the effective protection of the child or young person.

(2) The persons referred to in subsection (1) are entitled to consult with an experienced professional from the public youth welfare organisation regarding the assessment of the risk to the child's welfare. For this purpose, they

are authorised to transmit the necessary data to this person; the data must be pseudonymised before transmission.

(3) If it is not possible to avert the risk under subsection (1) or if action under subsection (1) is unsuccessful and the persons referred to in subsection (1) consider it necessary for the youth welfare office to take action to avert a risk to the welfare of a child or young person, they shall be authorised to inform the youth welfare office; the persons concerned shall be informed of this in advance, unless this undermines the effective protection of the child or young person. For this purpose, the persons referred to in sentence 1 are authorised to provide the youth welfare office with the necessary data. Sentences 1 and 2 shall apply to the persons referred to in subsection (1) no. 1 with the proviso that they should inform the youth welfare office immediately if, in their judgement, an urgent risk to the welfare of the child or young person requires the intervention of the youth welfare office. [...]

Data protection

Counselling centres in the field of exit work cannot work without processing personal data. They are therefore subject to the obligations of data protection, which can be found in the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the German Federal Data Protection Act and any sector-specific laws (e.g. the German Social Code).

Section 22 (1) no. 1 lit. D) German Federal Data Protection Act gives counselling centres the right to process personal data for reasons of substantial public interest. Such an interest exists if the counselling centres fulfil their counselling mandate (Deutscher Bundestag Drucksache 19/4674: 211). However, this data may only be processed in accordance with the original purpose for which it was gathered (i.e. counselling). Exceptions to this are only possible in specific situations, e.g. under the conditions of Section 24 German Federal Data Protection Act. According to this section, personal data may be passed on if it serves to avert (predicted) dangers to state or public security or in order to prosecute certain criminal offences, in particular in cases referred to under Section 138 German Criminal Code. This also includes offences which frequently occur in counselling work, such as those listed in Sections 89a, 89b, 89c German Criminal Code or Section 129a German Criminal Code (also in conjunction with Section 129b German Criminal Code).



Section 89a German Criminal Code: preparation of a serious offence endangering the state

4. Whoever prepares a serious violent offence endangering the state incurs a penalty of imprisonment for a term of between six months and 10 years. A “serious violent offence endangering the state” means an offence against life in the cases under Section 211 or 212 or against personal liberty in the cases under Section 239a or 239b and which, under the circumstances, is intended to undermine, and is adequate to the undermining of, the continued existence or security of a state or of an international organisation, or to abolish, rob of legal effect or subvert the constitutional principles of the Federal Republic of Germany. [...]



Section 89b German Criminal Code: establishment of relations for the purpose of committing a serious violent offence endangering the state

5. Whoever, with the intention of receiving instruction for the purpose of committing a serious violent offence endangering the state under Section 89a (2) no. 1, establishes or maintains relations with an organisation within the meaning of Section 129a, also in conjunction with Section 129b, incurs a penalty of imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or a fine. [...]



Section 89c German Criminal Code: financing of terrorism

- (1) Whoever collects, accepts or provides assets in the knowledge or with the intention that these are to be used by another person for the purpose of committing
 1. murder under specific aggravating circumstances (Section 211), murder (Section 212), genocide (Section 6 CCIL), a crime against humanity (Section 7 CCIL), a war crime (Section 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 CCIL), bodily harm under Section 224 or bodily harm which causes severe physical or emotional

trauma to another person, in particular of the type referred to in Section 226, [...] 6. offences under Section 51 (1) to (3) of the Weapons Act, [...] 8. an offence under Section 89a (2a) incurs a penalty of imprisonment for a term of between six months and 10 years. Sentence 1 only applies to cases under nos. 1 to 7 if one of the offences stipulated in those provisions is intended to seriously intimidate the population, to unlawfully coerce an authority or an international organisation by force or threat of force or to destroy or significantly impair the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a state or of an international organisation and which, given the nature or consequences of such offences, can seriously damage a state or an international organisation.

In contrast to the obligations to protect personal data, data protection law does not apply to data which is actually anonymised (recital 26 EU GDPR). However, sufficient care must be taken here to ensure that it is no longer possible to (re-)establish a connection with a certain person.

Lack of the right to refuse to testify

The obligation to testify in court is based on Section 48 of the German Code of Criminal Procedure, unless an exception is permitted by law. One of these exceptions is the right to refuse to testify. Relatives (Section 52 German Code of Criminal Procedure) and certain professional groups such as doctors, lawyers and psychotherapists (Section 53 German Code of Criminal Procedure) have such a right. Professionals who work in counselling centres in social environment support, distancing support and exit support in the area of religiously motivated extremism do not have this right to refuse to testify, unless they are members of the professions mentioned in these sections. This means that counsellors can be compelled to testify if summoned by a judge, by the public prosecutor or by the police on behalf of the public prosecutor's office. The consequences for counselling are considerable in some cases and make it difficult or impossible for some counselling sessions to take place before the conclusion of any criminal proceedings. During counselling, it is then not possible to discuss issues which are or which could be the subject of pending or possible future criminal proceedings, although it is often precisely these issues which it would be important to discuss. Nevertheless, clients do have to be informed about the counsellor's duty to testify in criminal proceedings.

Summary

This chapter is intended to show what is necessary, useful and helpful in order to be comprehensively prepared for a counselling session. It became clear that this is not just a matter of adequately reaching the target group, the location of the counselling or preparing the documentation. It was also shown what prior knowledge counsellors should acquire in this field of work in order to be well prepared for counselling. This includes knowledge of legal structures, awareness of one's own role and mindset in the counselling process and dealing with power imbalances in counselling. Areas such as the preparation of exit work methods, the development of knowledge of the structures of the extremist scene, interdisciplinary preparation or self-care were not included here. However, counselling requires more than just coordinated preparation. In addition to the normal follow-up to a counselling session, it can sometimes be helpful to visit a suitable person after a session for a debriefing, subject to the relevant data protection rules.

Notes:

- Good preparation for a counselling session is part of professional counselling.

- Counselling centres should regularly look at how they reach their target groups.

- Making the various tasks within a counselling session explicit and weighing them up against each other should also be part of the preparation for a counselling session, even if the tasks end up changing during the subsequent counselling session.

- The counsellor reflecting on their own role in counselling cannot only be done in preparation for a counselling session, but should also have its place there, as should continuous reflection on the power structure within a counselling session.

- It is essential to keep certain legal statutes, rights and obligations in mind during a counselling session. These concern fundamental rights such as freedom of religion and freedom of expression, but also rights to the protection of personal data and the obligation to report planned criminal offences in certain cases.

Communication: Techniques and Methods

Tobias Meilicke and Kim Lisa Becker

In addition to the basic mindset that the practitioners adopt in their work, it is primarily the methods and communication techniques used which are crucial for building relationships and trust and for encouraging changes in client behaviour. They also play a decisive role in the course of processes of reflection and the facilitation of introspective and emotional experiences which promote personal development. Here, the terms methods and communication techniques refer to specific tools which contribute to personal knowledge acquisition. This includes certain forms of communication, questioning techniques and exercises. In this chapter we therefore present fundamental principles of communication in counselling, specific techniques and cross-cutting methods which can be used in all counselling sessions. They help clients to gain new perspectives on issues and challenges, have positive relationship experiences and develop (new) solution strategies. Following on from this, Chapter 7 presents specific focal points and topics for sessions in more detail, together with examples of methods.

Communication as a Model: Watzlawick's Five Principles

Explicit preparation of counselling refers to the preliminary information provided in the context of child protection. Confidentiality and data protection are particularly important cornerstones for practitioners and their counselling clients. All of these legal aspects are discussed in more detail below.

In order to be able to use special techniques and methods in the counselling process in a targeted manner, it is helpful to have a basic understanding of the subject of communication. With this background knowledge, situations, questions and answers can often be better assessed and situations of conflict or uncertainties faced by the counsellor can be classified and reflected upon.

For the Austrian communication scientist Paul Watzlawick, communication encompasses everything that happens within an interaction between two or more people. People's perception of each other, everything that is said, but also those things that are not said: all of these things have significance within communication. Watzlawick established five principles which are still considered fundamental in communication science today and which are also important in (systemic) counselling practice (cf. Watzlawick et al. 2011):

1. *You can't not communicate, because all communication (not just with words) is behaviour and just as you can't not behave in some way, you can't not communicate.*

In the context of counselling, this first principle means that it is not only the actual words spoken which are important, but the entire counselling process. Gestures and facial expressions thus also help clients to feel safe, understood and acknowledged. However, silence can also have different meanings and fulfil different functions: a counsellor can give the client space to sort out their own thoughts and reflect on them without pressuring them to say something. Depending on the situation, silence on the part of the client can also express helplessness or signal that they expect that the other person will take the initiative

and thus provide a framework. Practitioners should therefore be aware that what is said is not the only thing that matters, and so they should also observe what else is happening in the counselling setting and be sensitive to non-verbal forms of communication. As they do so, they can usually rely on the fact that they themselves are already unconsciously contributing many of these components, as long as they are authentic. This is because non-verbal communication is socially learnt and largely internalised.

2. *All communication has a content aspect and a relationship aspect, with the latter determining the former.*

In order to be able to work on deradicalisation processes or distancing processes, a stable, trusting working relationship must first be established. This is also evident in the second principle formulated by Watzlawick. The relationship between counsellor and client determines how topics can or cannot be discussed. At the same time, blocked communication tells the counsellor that the relationship does not (yet) have the necessary stability and crucial level of trust. Implicitly, thoughts such as the following can block communication:

- *"I'm definitely not going to talk to you about my faith. You're just trying to lead me astray!"*
- *"You don't understand because you haven't had the same experiences as me."*
- *"I can't tell you that, because then you'll think badly of me."*
- *"If we talk about it, you'll only go and tell the police afterwards."*

(Power) hierarchies, which are often associated with differences in certain characteristics, such as age, gender or social background, can also have a significant influence on the relationship and, for example, make clients more polite, open-minded or reserved in their communication with counsellors (→ 5.2). They therefore also play a vital role in defining the relationship between the client and the counsellor.

3. *The nature of a relationship is determined by the way in which the communication partners develop their communication processes over time.*

This means that a communication situation – and this includes every counselling session – never starts from scratch, but builds on what is already there. In addition, after just a short time, the counsellor and client have a shared history, which feeds into

every additional encounter and continues over time. Everything that happens during counselling, and thus everything that is communicated, is simultaneously cause and effect. In short: every action is followed by a reaction. This is another way of getting to know and understand each other. Practitioners can make use of this, for example by reinforcing the relationship through anecdotes or reminiscences:

- *"This reminds me of our first session, when you told me that ..."*
- *"Now you can probably guess what I want to ask you about that, can't you?"*

4. *Human communication makes use of analogue and digital modalities.*

The fourth principle relates to the form of communication. While digital, i.e. verbal messages are usually transmitted very directly through speech or writing, analogue, i.e. non-verbal messages (transmitted via body language, facial expressions and gestures) are often accompanied by a great deal of room for interpretation. At the same time, analogue signals such as silence, smiles or sighs can support the interpretation of digital statements. It is therefore important for practitioners to behave in an authentic and natural way. When they do so, the digital messages match the analogue communication. It can also be helpful to pay attention to these two modalities of communication in counselling and to address them from time to time:

- *"I can hear you saying that you want to deal with this. But your folded arms tell me something else. Might there still be something in the way?"*
- *"You say you're fine, but you don't even want to look at me. Are you sure that there might not be something up after all?"*

Analogue communication also plays a key role in counselling because it is defined by the relationship, while the content level is usually conveyed digitally.

5. *Interpersonal communication processes are either symmetrical or complementary, depending on whether the relationship between the partners is based on equality or difference.*

While communication between equals is usually symmetrical, there is often a power imbalance between people when they communicate with each other in a complementary manner. This is the case, for example, when senior staff give their employees tasks in the form of instructions or when

a teacher sets tasks for their pupils. Discussions can also help to recognise whether a communication situation is progressing in a complementary way. However, relationships based on symmetrical or complementary communication are not automatically good or bad. In complementary forms of communication and relationships, the people involved will ideally complement and support each other, as there are usually differences between them. Thus, depending on the situation, both symmetrical and complementary communication can be helpful in counselling. At the same time, trust-building descriptions of real-life experiences can be just as beneficial to the counselling process as confrontations. What is important is that the practitioners, who have the task of setting the framework for a safe setting and guiding the process (even if they are guided by the other person in terms of setting priorities and speed), are sensitive to disruptions in the form of communication. This can be the case if misunderstandings arise or mixed messages are sent, for example if what a client expresses non-verbally differs from what they communicate verbally. It can also be the case that practitioners cannot (or can no longer) get through to the client with their hypotheses or suggested solutions. This can happen, for example, when everything put forward by the counsellor is rejected as wrong on principle. In such situations, it can be helpful to take a step back, detach yourself from the actual topic, visualise the conversation situation and work on the form of communication and, above all, work on the relationship.

Non-Violent Communication and Mediation

Practitioners in the field of religiously motivated extremism are faced with conflicts in all sorts of different ways. Generally, relatives of people who are (suspected to be) radicalised or at risk of radicalisation, professionals or index clients (people wanting to exit extremist communities) turn to a counselling centre because of conflicts. These can be external or internal. Such cases can involve very different conflict situations between various people involved in the system. Sometimes the counsellor is only confronted with one person and one perspective, and sometimes with a group setting and several people and their perspectives. Especially in group settings (e.g. with parental couples, families, several participating professionals) practitioners might end up being given the role of a mediator, in which they will want to and/or should support the overarching aim of finding a solution together or settling a dispute.

These situations of conflict are usually brought to the sessions and presented by those affected. It is often the case that the contradictions underlying the conflict have become entrenched in the form of communication. A resource-orientated perspective on these underlying contradictions is important in order to approach the function of contradictions and conflicts with an open mind: "Contradictions thus serve the function of both an alarm for the social system and of setting things in motion, maintaining the system and protecting it from ossifying" (Fuest-Bellendorf 2021: 26). It is therefore important to recognise that the conflicts described always have a history and function for the system and can have different meanings for the people or clients involved. In addition, index clients often experience inner conflicts which pave the way for a change in the first place – e.g. detachment or distancing from ideology and the radical scene. This is what makes changes in the system possible in the first place.

If counsellors then take on a direct or indirect mediating role or a mediating mandate within such situations of conflict, they have several options for how to approach this. Two fundamental approaches which counsellors can apply and internalise as a mindset and concrete communication method are outlined below: 1. More than anything else, non-violent communication (NVC) serves as a fundamental method of communication which

is designed to improve cooperation and well-being and which is applicable beyond the counselling setting in the context of the early stages of conflicts more generally. 2. Mediation, on the other hand, is more appropriate for acute or (highly) escalated situations of conflict and requires a clearly defined agreement between the parties involved to get some professional assistance using this form of conflict resolution.

Non-violent communication

Non-violent communication (NVC) was developed by the psychologist and mediator Marshall B. Rosenberg. However, this needs-orientated approach combines many theoretical and practical approaches and can also be found in models such as Schulz von Thun's communication model or in the approaches of Haim Omer. Rosenberg assumed that every form of violence, both verbal and physical, is a tragic expression of unfulfilled needs. Within communication and conflict management, NVC therefore explicitly focusses on the individual and sometimes conflicting needs of each person. This is particularly useful in the context of (de)radicalisation and distancing processes. Ultimately, here too it is social needs which help to determine which specific motives and attractions (push and pull factors) play a decisive role for the people threatened or affected by radicalisation (→ 2.3).

NVC is a specific concept of communication and action which aims to strengthen interpersonal relationships and cooperation in a positive way and to support the mutual understanding of (differing) needs. This is also intended to develop and encourage the internalisation of a constructive and respectful way of dealing with each other in general, especially where there is a threat of conflict or where a conflict has just begun. In other words: the focus is not on persuading people to act differently, but on improving relationships with one another by encouraging an attitude of appreciation. At the core of this is the ability to consciously empathise with oneself and one's own needs, but also to do so with the other person and their needs (change of perspective, empathy). A change in behaviour often follows as a natural consequence. This is why NVC as a form of communication is also closely linked to the client-centred approach (→ 3.3). It is suitable both for practitioners who are communicating and working with clients, as well as an aid or suggested approach for relatives or professionals who are in contact with the index clients.

Particularly in the case of processes of radicalisation, communication patterns within affected families are often strained by entrenched conflicts, accusations and attributions of certain labels. In the eyes of the parents, the child or young person is behaving "incorrectly", has perhaps made the "wrong friends" and just needs to come to – or be brought back to – their senses. Meanwhile, the radicalised children or young people

believe their parents have simply not understood the “truth” as they see it and are making it very difficult for them to live their religion properly, sometimes deliberately, behaving like all the infidels who are on the wrong path. What both positions have in common is that the people who hold them assume they know the truth and how to behave “properly” – or rather, how not to behave. Behind both positions, however, are equally socially minded motives, needs, assumptions and feelings which help to determine and influence the perception of the situation. NVC is a way of consciously addressing these needs by means of a specific mindset – and ultimately by means of a specific communication technique. This can often create a path out of the attitude of reproach, softening perceived divisions and making it possible for people to approach each other through empathic understanding of one another (and ultimately of themselves as well). This in turn creates a solid basis for being better able to break through processes of radicalisation – above all by improving, or even just maintaining, communication and the relationship with the person in question.

As previously mentioned, NVC is a particularly suitable method when a conflict has not yet fully escalated or come to a head, as it has a preventative effect before escalation (cf. Pohl/Dichtel 2021: 120). Ultimately, it is up to the counsellor to assess and possibly to try out NVC in order to find out whether, and to what extent, it is suitable as a targeted method, as it can be particularly effective if it is used authentically and on a voluntary basis. It requires continuous practice and internalisation, as sometimes firmly embedded patterns are consciously broken in favour of a new way of seeing and communicating. This is also challenging for many practitioners, as forms of communication which run counter to NVC are widespread and people have often been practising them for decades. This includes making moral judgements, making comparisons or thinking and speaking in terms of demands (cf. Rosenberg 2016: 29ff.).

Rosenberg (2016: 21) describes four specific key components of NVC:

1. Observations
2. Feelings
3. Needs
4. Requests

The first priority is therefore usually specific actions which are observed and may adversely affect well-being.

Case study

For example, a father visits a counselling centre because his son has changed a great deal – he dresses differently, talks all the time about what is allowed and what is forbidden and declares that he has converted to Islam. Recently, they had a heated argument when the father wanted to drink a beer and his son told him that this was fundamentally harmful and wrong.

Generally, people quickly jump from the first step of observation to the last step of requests, without explicitly realising which feelings and needs – both in themselves and in the other person (in this case the son) – are having an effect and influencing the situation. In some cases, the request remains implicit. Thus, to continue with our example, both the father and the counsellor may already infer from the descriptions themselves how the situation might be assessed and how the son, in this case the client, can, or should, deal with the situation. However, with the help of NVC, the intermediate process is made explicit during the counselling session. The counsellor reflects and asks the client about what feelings they associate with the observations and make these visible (→ 7.2). The father may be afraid for his son and his relationship with him, he may feel insecure and overwhelmed and he may feel frustrated when he senses that he can no longer get through to his son. The many changes in his son, which are an expression of a (suspected) process of radicalisation, worry and scare him – the heated argument about alcohol is the reason he turns to the counselling centre. He feels personally attacked when his son tells him that his behaviour is wrong (e. g. when he drinks alcohol). His son’s (assumed) feelings can also be discussed; he may feel disappointed when his father rejects him and his views and he may feel that he is not being taken seriously, i.e. valued.

In the next step, these feelings about the situation are then compared with the needs from which these feelings arise. For example, the father wants security in dealing with his son and he wants to maintain his relationship with his son because his son is important to him. At the same time, he does not want to have his freedom restricted in any way and sees no problem in drinking alcohol from time to time. The son may want his father to take his interests and views seriously and to respect them.

Following this process of reflection, which can also be stimulated with the help of specific exercises, especially with regard to the topic of attachment and feelings (→ 7.2), the next step is to formulate a request. For example, the father can decide to reveal his own feelings and needs to his son and then formulate his request. It is essential to formulate requests in the language of positive action, in terms of your own feelings and needs (“I” statements) and as specifically as possible (see Rosenberg 2016: 73ff. for details). This often needs to be practised and internalised using specific examples. For example,

it is more helpful if the father does not approach the son with negative formulations (“I don’t want you to tell me what to do”), but instead makes it clear what specific action he is asking for.

Case study



“I’ve been thinking about our last argument. When you told me that it would be better not to drink any more alcohol (observation), I was annoyed and frustrated (feeling). I think that was because my personal freedom is important to me and I want to be able to decide certain things for myself (need). At the same time, it is very important to me that we continue to have a good relationship with each other (need). Would you be willing to tell me how you felt when we argued (request)? I would like us to be able to live together happily, even if I sometimes do things that you don’t like (request).”

In practice, the contentious issue – in this case, alcohol – is usually part of a long series of dogmatic convictions and contentious issues in the context of radicalisation processes. The example here can be understood as one approach to opening up the discussion. Such approaches ultimately culminate in the question of communication about such contentious issues themselves and how they can be discussed. Though this process model is presented in a much-simplified manner in this example, counsellors should not understand this process model as a purely schematic flow chart: “The essence of NVC is found in our awareness of the four components and not in the actual words that are exchanged” (Rosenberg 2016: 23). This means that counsellors can also individually adjust this method, incorporating and weaving it into their counselling sessions. Putting the emphasis on empathic listening and focussing on individual observations, feelings, needs and the requests resulting from them is particularly important.

Practitioners can also give their clients this method as a helpful tool so they can consciously train new, respectful ways of communicating within the family when interacting with the index client and other family members. Particularly in situations of conflict, it is a good idea to take a step back and remind oneself of the four steps. This often defuses the situation. The father, for example, who feels attacked and gets angry when his son tries to explain to him the behaviour he considers appropriate, can take a deep breath and consciously ask himself or his son which of his own or his son’s needs currently requires attention. This enables him to better reflect on and understand the feelings that arise. It may be important for the son to explain his attitude and perspective to his father, to involve him and to maintain a connection with him. It can be just as important for the father to maintain a connection with his son, but he wants to be taken seriously and respected as a parent and have his view of the world respected too. In short:

if we are angry or experience some other negative feeling, this usually indicates that one or more needs are currently not being fulfilled. Conscious reflection can create or maintain an appreciative, empathetic connection between people – even in situations of conflict. NVC thus represents more than a concrete method, as it is also possible to integrate it into the mindset of the counsellor and the client to a certain extent, provided that they feel comfortable with this form of communication and are willing and able to use it authentically.

Mediation

Mediation is another way of providing support in situations of conflict and helping to reach an agreement or compromise. The mediation process in Germany follows certain standards, such as the guidelines of the German Federal Mediation Association (cf. BMEV 2022; Mayer 2019: 88). Counsellors in the field of religiously motivated extremism who have not undergone mediation training may find it helpful to learn about the mediation process and important core aspects of the technique, as they may occasionally find themselves in mediating roles and assignments during the course of their work. In such cases, the relevant background knowledge has the potential to help the disputing parties to (better) emerge from their situation of conflict. The positive relationship between parents and their child or between a young person and the professional can be improved, e.g. strengthened or maintained, which may support deradicalisation or distancing. It must be emphasised, however, that – as with all approaches and methods – relevant background knowledge is helpful, but it cannot replace sound training in the area in question.

Mediation refers to intercession by a third, impartial party in cases of conflict and dispute (cf. Mayer 2019: 71). There is a strong tradition of mediation and reconciliation in Islamic or Muslim-orientated cultures (cf. *ibid.*: 84). The aim of mediation is to find a way for all parties to a dispute to get out of the situation of conflict feeling as satisfied as possible (win-win solution). To this end, the mediator works out what the different interests, positions and underlying needs are. This should ultimately lead to a common denominator being found and the scope for action and dialogue being expanded (cf. *ibid.*).

NVC is often very beneficial as a method within this process. The common guiding principle of both approaches is being focussed on solutions: “Conflicts are, on this view, not there to be eliminated, but are instead a challenge and an opportunity to develop and improve mutual relationships” (*ibid.*: 28). This is also reflected in the Harvard Negotiation Project method: “The method of principled negotiation developed at the Harvard Negotiation Project is to decide issues on their merits rather than through a haggling process focused on what each side says it will and won’t do” (Fisher et al. 2004: 20). Rosenberg himself

distinguishes NVC from mediation by explaining: “Please note that I use the word satisfaction rather than compromise! Most attempts at resolution search for compromise, which means everybody gives something up and neither side is satisfied. NVC is different; our objective is to meet everyone’s needs fully” (Rosenberg 2016: 154). However, this is more likely to succeed in the initial stages of a conflict. If conflict situations have already (significantly) escalated, it is all the more challenging to generate mutual empathy and understanding. The fact that systems can escalate is due to their structure, intensity and duration, because “as social systems, conflicts are autopoietic, self-reproducing units. Once established, they can be expected to continue rather than to end” (Luhmann 1996: 537). In the context of radicalisation in particular, conflicts have often escalated greatly and are characterised by strong emotions such as fear and anger.

Practitioners choose NVC or mediation approaches primarily on the basis of personal attitudes and the individual setting and task:

- Can I identify with this method of attitudes and action?
- Can I, and do I wish to, incorporate this approach or similar ones authentically into my work or into a specific case?
- Would the clients like to be offered mediation?

It is also important to remember that practitioners cannot easily change their roles and assignments. An example of this would be if a young person had previously received counselling (and the counsellor has thus gained their trust and automatically become partial) and mediation between the young person and the parents or professionals is now desired. In such a case, it is advisable to involve another person, e.g. a colleague, as a mediator in order to ensure impartiality (→ 4.7). Ideally, this person would also have been trained as a mediator.

It also makes sense to consider the level of conflict or escalation that a counselling case entails. Highly escalated conflicts are characterised by such phenomena as the involvement and instrumentalisation of previously uninvolved third parties (e.g. the children of parents who are in conflict), people threatening each other, the mutual loss of trust and the domination of extreme feelings (e.g. anger, hatred, disgust) (cf. Fuest–Bellendorf 2021: 30f.). Practitioners sometimes encounter such levels of conflict in disputes between radicalised and non-radicalised parents who disagree on parenting methods and who are already involved in legal custody disputes. In particularly drastic cases, physical violence may have occurred or may (regularly) occur in the course of the conflict. For example, parents may have tried to “drive the religious madness out of the child” by tearing off their child’s headscarf or there may

have been other excessive forms of physical or psychological violence (→ 7.10). As a result, factual conflicts quickly turn into relationship conflicts, which in turn often become what are fundamentally power conflicts (cf. Messmer 2003). The concern that both parties to the dispute should emerge from the conflict with a win (*win-win*) is then replaced by ideas that aim at one party losing and the other winning (*lose-win*). In highly escalated systems, both parties can then “fall into the abyss together” (*lose-lose*) (for a detailed account of escalation level models, see also Fuest–Bellendorf 2021: 26ff.).

The main difference between systemic counselling and mediation lies in the fact that mediation processes involve topic-related negotiations, which means their scope is much smaller and more focussed. This is particularly crucial in systems which are in conflict (cf. *ibid.*: 65). For example, religiously influenced situations of conflict can prevent parents from being able to make autonomous decisions together. However, this in turn is the basis for the continuation of shared parenting responsibility. In addition to focussed attention within mediation, the emotional process is just as important. This in turn “feeds [...] on the sources of systemic therapy, counselling and process management as a whole” (*ibid.*: 65).

With the help of mediation, the parties involved can be supported in putting an end to threats or acts of violence by developing alternative forms of communication which offer sufficient protection to all parties involved (cf. *ibid.*: 36). NVC can be a helpful tool within mediation, but mediation provides a safe and structured framework. In order to implement such a framework within mediation, there is usually a structure which is consistently adhered to, dividing the process into clear phases (basic blueprint) (cf. *ibid.*: 64). Simplified models assume three phases, the majority of models assume five phases and some models, which are often topic-specific, even assume eight or more phases. In order to be able to offer sufficient coverage, it is recommended that counsellors focus on five or six relevant phases:

1. Introduction
2. Collecting topics together
3. Interests and needs
4. Solution-finding
5. Agreement
6. Assessment (optional):

In the introduction phase (phase 1), contact is established with the disputing parties and it is clarified whether they can accept the offer of mediation, as explained by the mediator. The mediator also explores whether the conflict, as presented and outlined by the parties, can be resolved through mediation. For the mediator and the disputing parties, the focus is therefore on getting to know each other for the first time and on setting up the formal framework (consent to mediation, formal procedure, rules, time frame, etc.). Rules are jointly defined and agreed together with the parties to the dispute, such as allowing each other to speak, using “I” statements, refraining from verbal or physical attacks and keeping the conversation confidential. The latter point is often discussed in depth beforehand (cf. Mayer 2019: 71). This can be done at one-to-one meetings before the mediation, but can also be done right at the beginning in the first joint meeting. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust. It should also be clear that mediation cannot replace therapeutic or legal proceedings, but rather accompanies, supplements or supports them (cf. *ibid.*). Another important point is that, just as in the case of NVC, mediation and the decision to engage in it can only take place on a voluntary basis. During this phase, the mediator introduces their own role and the framework for mediation and is available to answer questions. The mediator should make it clear that their stance is one of impartiality. This must be made clear verbally as well as through the actions of the mediator. They can express this, for example, by holding preparatory discussions with all parties before the joint meeting.

Impartiality in mediation

Remaining impartial during mediation is often not easy. Generally, people (including counsellors) tend to think in terms of perpetrator–victim narratives or consciously or unconsciously take sides. To a significant degree, such tendencies have to do with a person’s own biography and mindset. Counsellors should therefore – if they take on a mediating role in the counselling – reflect on things and train themselves to imagine how both or all parties could possibly emerge from the dispute as winners. Intervision and supervision meetings are helpful for reflecting on one’s own mindset. Ideally, such a reflective attitude is consolidated through solid training in mediation and relevant practical experience.

Within mediation, various communication and questioning techniques can be used from the outset (→ 6.3), such as active listening, mirroring, reframing, “I” statements or NVC. At this stage, the conflicting parties often do not yet speak directly with each

other, instead primarily doing so with or through the mediator.

Once it has been jointly decided that mediation is desired and the mediation framework has been jointly established, the issues relevant to the conflict can be gathered together (phase 2). This primarily involves describing the conflict and having a thorough understanding of it. It is important that all parties be given the same amount of time to describe their own perspective and the history of the conflict. Space can be given to both facts and feelings here. This can provide the participants with some emotional relief. The mediator usually asks comprehension questions and the most important key aspects can be visibly noted on a flipchart if necessary. It may also be useful to rank the most urgent points in order to set a corresponding (joint) focus for finding a solution later on.

Following on from the descriptions, the feelings and needs that the parties to the dispute associate with the issues are discussed (phase 3). This is a central and very important phase, because “most negotiations take place in the context of an ongoing relationship. It is therefore essential to conduct any negotiation in such a way that future relationships and future negotiations are enhanced rather than impaired” (Fisher et al. 2004: 46). In addition, the dispute is usually not (exclusively) about a factual conflict, but is often closely intertwined with the level of personal relationships (cf. *ibid.*: 47). By working out what the feelings and needs are, the different interwoven levels can be considered and negotiated separately. In addition, entrenched positions are resolved in this phase and a shared basis for understanding is created. During this phase, the parties to the conflict listen and also speak directly to each other (cf. Mayer 2019: 96). The most important needs generally include security, an economic livelihood, a sense of belonging, recognition and self-determination (cf. Fisher et al. 2004: 81). The disputing parties often only become aware of these underlying feelings and needs in themselves, and particularly in the other party, when they start to talk about them. A wide variety of methodological approaches can be used here, depending on the topic (→ 7).

This phase is followed by solution-finding (phase 4). The rapprochement which occurs during the previous phases makes it easier for all parties involved to submit concrete proposals for solutions, which are then collected and noted down by the mediator. Different communication and questioning techniques can also be used here, such as improvement and deterioration questions or the miracle question (→ 6.3). The parties can also assemble or draw up proposed solutions, or find them with the help of the “inner team” (→ 7.11). In addition to ideas for finding creative solutions, the mediator now increasingly withdraws from the discussions and to a large extent lets the conflicting parties work out the solution themselves (cf. Mayer 2019: 97). This is based on the assumption that the solution to the problem usually lies in the experts themselves (→ 3.2). One way of checking the feasibility of solutions is to use the SMART model

as a guide. According to this model, the solutions introduced or sought should be as specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound as possible (cf. *ibid.*: 102).

Mediation ends when the parties to the conflict have reached agreement (phase 5). This can be recorded verbally or in writing. Preferences here depend on the setting and the parties involved in the conflict. In many cultures, a reconciliation ritual such as a handshake or a hug also forms part of the conclusion of the conflict resolution (cf. *ibid.*: 101).

A further, optional phase is assessment (phase 6), in which the disputing parties meet with the mediator again after a mutually agreed period of time (e.g. two weeks) and reflect on the extent to which the goals set and the agreements regarding the solution have been implemented and where there may still be a need for readjustment.

Questioning and Communication Techniques

In addition to the counsellor's basic mindset in the counselling process, special methods and techniques can also contribute to the establishment of a good and trusting working relationship with the client. Nevertheless, the success of a counselling session can depend on a variety of factors. These include individual open-mindedness and curiosity, as well as openness to being surprised, respect and appreciation, personal honesty and transparency, the willingness to deal with conflict and contradiction, a certain ease and humour, personal reliability and, above all, the confidentiality of the counselling that is offered (→ 4.2). All these factors are less technical than they are personal and interpersonal. They can be supported using various techniques and methods.

However, it also depends on how a particular technique or method is introduced and applied. It must therefore be remembered that simply "reading up" on methods is no substitute for solid training in counselling or therapy. These techniques can only really be learnt, i.e. experienced, personally comprehended and firmly internalised, within the framework provided by such training. The explanations in this chapter should therefore only be understood as a source of inspiration and as a collection of suggestions which must be reflected upon when they are used, orientated to the individual situation in question

and applied in a critical, self-aware manner.

Guiding questions for practitioners can be: to what extent do I trust myself to use the techniques listed here? How can I make them my own? It is advisable to try out the techniques beforehand, at least with colleagues, and to experience them yourself from the client's perspective. By experiencing these techniques for themselves, practitioners get an initial impression of the opportunities, and possibly the difficulties, which arise through the use of certain techniques. They can then use them all the more purposefully and appropriately in challenging situations.

Communication techniques

Different communication techniques are helpful instruments or "tools" in the counselling process. Just as clients and their individual situations and concerns differ, so too do the effects of the various techniques and methods. Depending on the situation and the client, the same method may be appealing and effective on some occasions, while at other times it may cause annoyance or even have a deterrent effect. It is therefore crucial that practitioners learn to assess and sound out which method is (particularly) appropriate and helpful for whom and in which situation. This affects practitioners and clients alike: practitioners, too, usually do not find all communication techniques or question formats easy to use and they cannot use them all at will. It is important to stay authentic and to use the techniques and methods that you feel comfortable with as a counsellor. Clients will also have their own individual likes and dislikes. While some are particularly receptive to creative writing methods, others will reject these and prefer methods which involve images or which are communication-orientated, for example. Practitioners should therefore not be afraid to try things out for themselves and develop them further, nor should they be afraid to encounter rejection. Instead, they should freely and openly communicate what comes to them naturally and find out what methods the client is prepared to work with.

An example of such individual judgements is whether to use first or last names, which can often serve to establish closeness or distance. Even though age is often a key factor in deciding who is on first-name terms with whom in a counselling context, this can also be negotiated individually at the beginning of a counselling relationship. While some counsellors or clients – seemingly as a matter of course – automatically use first or last names, in other cases this has to be explicitly clarified.

Communication techniques:

- Active listening and appreciation
- Mirroring and reflection
- Reframing
- Metaphors, stories and images
- Silence
- Humour
- Creative writing
- Recognising and promoting change talk

Active listening and appreciation

Listening is one of the basic techniques of a good counsellor and yet is often underestimated. Proper listening means engaging with the other person as much as possible and putting your own thoughts aside. This is not always easy, as in conversations, statements made by the other person are often consciously or unconsciously scrutinised and evaluated with regard to supposed truths or expectations. Occasionally, practitioners may even feel the urge to “put things right”, to correct clients or to immediately try to find solutions to problems. They might, for example, want to give advice without first having fully understood the client’s concerns. This risk exists in particular in counselling situations which are strongly influenced by societal discourses and external expectations, as is the case with counselling in the context of religiously motivated extremism. The social pressure to succeed often leads to inexperienced practitioners in particular not giving the counselling process, the clients and themselves the time and space they actually need. In such cases, practitioners are more preoccupied with themselves than they are with the concerns of their clients. In contrast to this, William Isaacs describes listening as a state of “inner silence [...] You don’t have to retreat to a monastery or allow yourself to be converted, but you do have to make a conscious effort to cultivate a setting within yourself and together with others in which listening is possible, or to put it another way: we need to create a space where listening can happen” (Isaacs 2002: 86).

However, active listening is not just about internally following the client’s thoughts. It also means reacting to them appropriately and encouraging further dialogue. This can be done by making sounds of agreement and encouragement

as well as by nodding or making hand gestures. Sometimes it is helpful for the counsellor to use positive words or short phrases in response to the client’s comments, for example utterances such as “hmm”, “good”, “impressive” or “great”. Active listening is then supported by “cheering clients on”, which often has an encouraging effect when it comes to reflection and change processes (cf. Lindemann 2020: 85). Compliments and appreciation are similarly appropriate.

 Example:

“I noticed how difficult it was for you to talk to me about your past today. This makes me all the more impressed that you still decided to have this conversation, that you opened up to me and that we were also able to talk about topics which are painful for you. I think you’ve taken a big step today towards overcoming the past and moving towards a better future.”

However, such encouragement, as well as other supportive verbal and non-verbal signals in the counselling process, do need to be authentic. Counsellors have to find their own style.

Mirroring and reflection

Mirroring is a relatively simple technique in which the counsellor repeats parts of a sentence or an entire sentence spoken by the client and the content is thus brought back into the conversation. The client’s expressions or statements are thus mirrored. This encourages the client to make additional and more in-depth comments, which may lead to new insights into their feelings and thoughts. Initially, clients may experience a moment of self-awareness. This is because we find out what we think when we hear our own words. Things which we are perhaps not entirely or only partially aware of, things which have left our minds; these can become perceptible when someone mirrors what we have said. Mirroring is also a very good way of questioning whether what has been said is really true. In this way, absolute statements made by the client can be pointed out and exceptions to a particular statement or assertion identified.

 Example:

Client:	My mother never understood me and was never interested in me.
Counsellor:	Never? [Mirroring]
Client:	Well, at least not after I converted to Islam.
Counsellor:	Not after you converted to Islam. [Mirroring]

Client:No. (longer pause) Although, once in the beginning, she came to the mosque with me.

Counsellor:Ah, that’s interesting. What was it like for you when she went along?

In addition to mirroring, reflecting is another way of revisiting what has been said. Essentially, it is about “formulating an assumption as to what the person in question might mean by their statement” (Miller/Rollnick 2015: 73). The basic assumption here is that people already have a concern before they communicate, but are sometimes only able to convey this to a limited extent in their own words. Through reflection, practitioners try to get closer to this concern. The assumption is formulated as a statement and not as a question, as questions explicitly require answers. Questions would place a demand on the client. This can put pressure on them and lead to a defensive attitude that blocks self-reflection processes rather than supporting them (cf. Miller/Rollnick 2015: 73ff.).

Example:

Client:My mother never understood me and was never interested in me.

Counsellor:So, you were quite lonely. [Reflection]

Client:Well, I still had my friend Fatima and her family. I often spent time there as a child and could see another way of being a family. They all ate together, chatted and supported each other. And I was always welcome.

Counsellor:You felt safe and secure there. [Reflection]

Client:Yes. And I also learnt a lot about Islam. Fatima’s father always read from the Qur’an. I didn’t understand much, but somehow Islam fascinated me.

Counsellor:So you were very curious and wanted to learn more about Islam.

Client:Absolutely. I wanted to know more and at some point I started to research it on the internet. That’s how I came across Pierre Vogel on YouTube ...

The more secure practitioners feel, the more complex their reflections can become. Then they can also refer to their clients’ body language, volume and tone of voice, among other things.



Example:

Client:My mother never understood me and was never interested in me.

Counsellor:You just went very quiet when you told me that your mother was never interested in you. So, you were a very lonely child. And I’m noticing that you don’t really want to look at me anymore, either. You seem very sad to me now. [Complex reflection]

Client:Yes. I often felt lonely as a child ... (client starts crying)

Reframing

Reframing is another effective technique frequently used by practitioners. It involves a reassessment of individual behaviours, situations or major challenges that clients have usually perceived as negative. Reframing is based on the assumption that there are always two (or more) sides to a coin and that much depends on point of view and perspective. With a positive reinterpretation, the counsellor tries to break through existing patterns of negative attributions, self-accusations and criticism by pointing out positive side effects of the difficult situation, thus creating an overall readjustment.

There are three basic types of reframing: meaning, context and content reframing. In the reframing of meaning, negative behaviours are assigned new, positive interpretations.



Examples:

Sensitive	Empathic, has good intuition
Lazy	Trusts others to do a lot, knows how to achieve a lot with little effort
Entangled	Well networked
Whingy	Can show their feelings, is not shy about them, confident
Rebellious	Independent, autonomous

If a client describes themselves as rebellious, the counsellor will investigate this self-perception and examine, together with the client, some of the situations that the client has described to illustrate this. This may also provide an opportunity for suggesting that there are positive aspects to this rebelliousness, such that the client’s nature can be seen as a resource.

Context reframing, on the other hand, involves imagining a situation in which the behaviour perceived as negative could have an effect which makes sense or solves problems. It is possible to see defiance, for example, as an important element in the healthy process of children and young people becoming more independent from their parents. This process can have an exaggerated and powerful effect when young people join a radical movement. This is often a major provocation and leads to increased distance and disputes between parents and their children. It can help to determine the extent to which this rebelliousness was perhaps also intended to make the process of becoming independent easier for the parents. Content reframing, meanwhile, aims to bring the (good) intention underlying a behaviour pattern which is perceived as negative to the fore (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 312ff.).

Metaphors, stories and images

Metaphors are also an effective tool and are frequently used in counselling. Using metaphors allows structural, visual characteristics of certain experiences to be transferred to other areas, thus enabling both clients and practitioners to broaden their horizons of perception (cf. Caby/Caby 2017a: 38ff.). In this way, new solutions can be developed in an almost playful way. Metaphors are particularly useful when they are introduced by the clients themselves, as there is already an emotional connection to the image and no additional transfer work is required. Images introduced by the clients should therefore be adopted and used by practitioners wherever possible.

Examples:

Client:	At the moment it feels like I am balanced on the high wire between my husband and my parents.
Counsellor:	I find this image quite striking. I imagine such a balancing act must be quite strenuous. How do you cope with it?
Client:	It feels like I'm on a sinking boat.
Counsellor:	Mm, a sinking boat. How much time is left until the boat has gone down? What would your lifeboat be in the current situation?
Client:	I can see light at the end of the tunnel.
Counsellor:	I find your image of the end of the tunnel quite striking. Tell me, what things can be found at the end of the tunnel? And regarding the journey there: what makes the tunnel so narrow and dark?

Stories work in a similar way to metaphors. They can open up new perspectives on current life situations and make the client's resources visible. In Europe, stories are currently not used so frequently in everyday communication, while in other parts of the world they are very common in everyday culture and can also be used as a counselling technique (see especially Bucay 2019 for stories which are easy to transfer). The Iranian therapist Nossrat Peseschkian also used "oriental stories" in his positive psychotherapy and published several specialised books on the subject in the 1980s (cf. Peseschkian 1979). In counselling in the context religiously motivated extremism with reference to Islam, there is a lot of potential in stories, as many clients have connections to Arab countries in their family histories. They have therefore often grown up with similar stories being passed on to them by their parents and grandparents and often associate these stories with positive experiences. If practitioners have knowledge of stories and metaphors to that effect, which they can make available to clients as an opportunity for reflection, this is certainly something to be welcomed.



Examples:

"Believe in God and tie up your camel. The believers came in droves to hear the words of the Prophet Muhammad. One man, listening particularly attentively and devotedly, prayed with devout fervour and it took until evening for him to finally say goodbye to the Prophet. As soon as he was outside, he came running back again, shouting hoarsely: 'Oh Lord! This morning I rode to you on a camel, to hear you, the Prophet of God. Now the camel is gone. There is no camel to be seen. I was obedient, listened to every single word you said and trusted in God's almightiness. Now, oh Lord, my camel is gone. Is this God's justice? Is this the reward for my faith? Is this what I get for my prayers?' Muhammad listened to his words of despair and with a kind smile he replied: 'Believe in God and tie up your camel'" (Peseschkian 1979: 43).

"Once upon a time, there were two frogs who fell into a pot of cream. Immediately, it began to dawn on them that they were about to drown: swimming or floating was impossible in this sticky mass. Initially, the frogs struggled fiercely in the cream as they tried to get to the edge of the pot. But it was in vain, they didn't get anywhere and they began to sink. They could feel how it was getting more and more difficult to stay on the surface to breathe. One of them said: 'I can't carry on any longer. We can't get out of here. It's impossible to swim in this soup. And if I have to die anyway, why should I struggle any longer? What sense does it make to die of exhaustion in the struggle for a hopeless cause?' he said. Then he stopped paddling and sank faster than you could see, literally swallowed up by the thick white liquid.

The other frog, more dogged by nature, or maybe just more stubborn, said to himself: 'Not a chance. It's pointless. I'll never get out of this bucket. And yet, I won't just give in to death. I will fight until my last breath. I won't waste a single second, before my last hour has come.' He carried on paddling for hours and hours, without making even an inch of progress. And with all the struggling and pushing with his legs and paddling and kicking, the cream slowly turned into butter. Surprised, the frog jumped and wriggled his way to the edge of the pot. From there, he then hopped home, croaking with happiness" (Bucay 2019: 29ff.).

Images can also be an appropriate tool in counselling sessions. Similarly to verbalised images in the form of metaphors, they help to make situations, desires or emotional states tangible. For example, counsellors can bring along pictures that express different emotional states, or they can ask the clients themselves to choose one or more pictures which have a special meaning for them or express something. Simple postcards are suitable for this, as are specially produced therapy cards (e.g. Familie Erdmann, cf. Vogt/Bexte n.d.). The images serve as a projection surface, facilitating the expression of experiences and feelings. However, practitioners should take a religiously and culturally sensitive approach when selecting images for use in work in the field of religiously motivated extremism. In particular, they should not ask clients to see God in the images that are presented, nor should they show images of the Prophet or use certain animals (e.g. pigs) as symbols for feelings. The same applies to images which may lead to re-traumatisation. If the client has had brutal experiences in their past (such as war and persecution), images which address such topics should be avoided from the outset.

Images can also be used in counselling for relatives, e.g. to find out what might have attracted the index client to a radical ideology or movement (→ 7.12). After all, a picture is often worth a thousand words and can be very helpful when it comes to reflecting on and understanding things.

Silence

At first glance, it may seem somewhat absurd that silence is explicitly mentioned here. However, it too is an important tool in counselling. This is because being silent but present gives the client the chance to think, reflect and develop new ideas. Sometimes a well-placed silence is more effective than any additional question, which would simply distract or open up secondary topics. Nevertheless, it is not always easy for practitioners to establish and maintain a shared silence. It is not uncommon for both practitioners and clients to associate silence with insecurity or incompetence, which in the worst case can lead to a breakdown in the relationship.

This is easily prevented, however. On the one hand, it can be helpful for counsellors to openly share with clients any

uncertainties they might have about how best to continue the conversation and to talk about what might be causing this uncertainty. This can be linked to another question or hypothesis. It is thus possible to deal honestly and purposefully with those silences which sometimes do indeed arise from moments of personal insecurity. One of the reasons why this is important is that such uncertainties and moments of bias often arise from unconscious relationship entanglements between practitioners and clients. These are something which needs to be clarified anyway (→ 4.4).

Furthermore, in moments of deliberate silence, it is always possible for the counsellor to use this time to remind themselves of the reasons for this and what they can say if the client indicates that silence is difficult for them. For example, the counsellor can say:

- *"Oh, I hope you didn't find that uncomfortable. I just thought, I'd better not say anything for a bit. Because it seemed to me that you were looking for your own thoughts and words. I didn't want to interrupt. Were you about to say something?"*
- *"I was just quiet for a moment, because it seemed that you had just had an idea. Is that the case?"*

In general, it should always be remembered that silence is not nothing. A sympathetic silence enables the open-minded listening and attentive observation with which the practitioners accompany their clients. In this case, silence means being mindful and expectant. Thus, in counselling too, silence can sometimes be golden, and even more gold can be gained during the conversation which happens afterwards.

Humour

Humour is not a conventional method within counselling, but more of a question of personality, as it is not something which can simply be learnt. It can, however, be used in counselling in a targeted way and has proven itself effective across the various schools of psychotherapy. Humour helps, for example, to establish the therapeutic relationship and to reduce stress levels and build up resistance to stress. It can also help to relieve physical symptoms, such as high blood pressure (for details, see Europäischer Berufsverband für Lachyoga und Humortraining e. V. 2022). Potentially, humour can also help clients to step out of themselves a little and find new ways to access their own emotional and cognitive resources from a different perspective. Accordingly, practitioners should not shy away from using humour from time to time, even when dealing with difficult topics. For example, a humorous account of the client's behaviour can have positive effects. When using humour, it is important that the relationship with the client is

stable and that any humour is used with caution and in good measure. The counsellor's aim must be to create shared laughter about oneself – and never laughter about others, as this may be derogatory (cf. Levold & Wirsching 2020: 268ff.). A careful and sensitive introduction is always advisable. For example, the counsellor might say: *"I couldn't help it, I just had a funny thought which made me smile inside ..."*

Creative writing

Writing can also be used in the counselling process in various ways. Due to the self-exploration and self-recognition which writing makes possible, it always has a (self-)therapeutic character, as well as effects which are to a certain degree longer-term (cf. Heime 2015: 17). In the case of positive experiences, for example, writing can invoke the state of mind associated with that experience: "By writing, I can stop time, I can pause and reflect, empathise – I can taste life a second time" (Unterholzer 2017: 11). Negative experiences can be externalised through writing. This gives them a location, so to speak. Writing also allows people to focus on what helped them to get through the experience.

It can take all manner of forms and fulfil a very wide range of functions. While letters are probably the most popular and frequently used therapeutic writing method (cf. Unterholzer 2017: 75), writing short notes, diaries, inner monologues or even entire scripts or poems is also a possibility. No limits are set on the creativity of practitioners and clients.

Letters, for example, make it possible to address your own thoughts to different addressees in a quiet setting, ideally with plenty of time to do so. In addition to letters to those in the client's immediate social environment (e.g. family members), letters can also be addressed to prominent figures and role models, to imaginary people or to oneself (the client's future self, for example). Whether these letters are actually sent, discussed in counselling, kept entirely private or ceremonially destroyed (e.g. buried or burnt) is something which should be decided according to the client's needs. Writing down their experiences, desires and thoughts can help clients to sort out their thoughts and feelings, but at the same time give them a special space which they can use and make decisions about as they wish. It is therefore helpful to emphasise that the written words remain with the client, as they are their personal property and therefore private, and that they will only be discussed if the client explicitly requests this during a counselling session.

The counsellor themselves can also write letters to their clients. This can be used for example to deepen something (e.g. the relationship between client and counsellor), to record something (e.g. a new perspective or a resource available to the client), to add something (e.g. to share further thoughts or pick up on what has not yet been said), to continue something

(e.g. a dialogue that has already begun) or to apologise (e.g. if something has been overlooked) (cf. Bamberger 2010: 211). However, according to the Israeli family therapist Haim Omer, letters written to clients who have discontinued counselling should only be written if they serve the client and not for the purpose of remedying the counsellor's own feelings of discomfort (cf. Unterholzer 2017: 75f.).

Sometimes it is advisable to keep particularly sensitive or painful topics out of the counselling sessions and only deal with them in the form of written correspondence with the client. Writing can be a helpful support, especially for sensitive or shameful topics (→ 7.9). If clients find it particularly difficult to verbalise shameful experiences, assessments or feelings, writing may be a method of dealing with these thoughts in a gentle and intimate way – and they only need to be shared if the client explicitly wishes this. Practitioners can recommend an elevenie poem, for example, as a simple poetic form to capture a feeling or a situation (→ 7.2).

As a method in counselling, writing ties in with the fact that counselling always has an effect beyond its setting. Clients leave with suggestions and thoughts to reflect on – but a large part of the process takes place outside the counselling session. Writing is therefore particularly suitable because clients can write when it seems appropriate and when they see fit – the method thus provides extended scope of action for experiences in other places. Especially for clients whose native language is not the same as the counsellor's and who may be more confident and precise in that language, it is often an advantage to write down their thoughts in their native language instead.

Recognising and promoting change talk

In motivational interviewing, change talk refers to all verbal statements made by the client which indicate a personal change. As a first step, it is important for practitioners to recognise and acknowledge such statements. Change talk is primarily aimed at expressing wishes, abilities, reasons or needs which clients communicate themselves regarding a possible change. If practitioners put forward their own arguments in favour of change, these will tend to be rejected.

Examples:

- *"I wish I could be more honest with my parents."* [Wish]
.....
- *"I hope, next year, I'll be able to lead a normal life."* [Wish]
.....
- *"I could certainly start an apprenticeship."* [Ability]
.....
- *"Actually, I was quite good at school. I could probably catch up and do my (i.e. 'A' levels) levels."* [Ability]
.....

- *"I would probably be happier then."* [Reasons]
- *"It would help me to deal with my anger better."* [Reasons]
- *"I have to ..., otherwise ..."* [Necessity]

The greater the client's desire for change, the more the above-mentioned elements are underpinned by the counsellor's promotion of activation language, by the client making commitments to themselves or even through the client preparing to take their first steps towards a change.

Examples:

- *"I am ready to ..."* [Activation language]
- *"Soon, I would like to ..."* [Self-commitment]
- *"I have no choice but to ..."* [Self-commitment]
- *"I've started writing job applications."* [First steps]

As a general principle, the counsellor should try to evoke this change talk in their counselling clients. The more often a client speaks in this way, the more likely it is that changes will occur (cf. Miller/Rollnick 2015: 203). In addition to recognising the client's arguments in favour of change, change talk can be supported by the counsellor asking in-depth questions about specific desires, abilities, motives and needs with respect to change (cf. *ibid.*: 203ff.).

Sometimes, however, clients express a kind of change talk that can leave the counsellor puzzled. These are difficult situations in which direct confrontation is usually not advisable. Statements such as:

- *"I don't believe you!"*
- *"You're just saying what I want to hear!"*
- *"That's unrealistic. Don't fool yourself ..."*

will simply cause incomprehension and bewilderment in the client. Some clients will already have experienced the unpleasantness of such doubts and rejections during police interrogations. They can lead clients to adopt a defensive attitude or withdraw from the counselling session out of a need to protect themselves. In contrast, it often makes more sense to clarify the client's statements in more detail during a joint discussion and to give them the required space for change



(cf. *ibid.*: 212ff.). In this context, curiosity can be understood not only as a general attitude (→ 4.6), but also as a method. Sarcasm and accusations of self-deception or insincerity, on the other hand, should be avoided.



Example:

Client:	No, I really am in the process of turning my back on the Salafist scene. I can assure you of that.
Counsellor:	What made you decide to do this? [Question about motivation]
Client:	I'm just doing it, because they don't do me any good. That's enough of a reason.
Counsellor:	Very good. And I'm just curious as to why you want to do this now, when you've had all your friends in the scene up to now and felt comfortable there.
Client:	Well, I had a conversation with my mother. The first real one in years and she cried a lot and said that she was very scared for me. And for once, I really had the feeling that I was important to her. And that really got to me.
Counsellor:	It must have been really hard to see your mother like that. I have the feeling that she means a lot to you. [Reflection] But what other reasons might there have been? What else made you decide to abandon your old friends?
Client:	Well, the police said that if I carry on like this, it's only a small step to a criminal offence and prison.
Counsellor:	And what do you think about that?
Client:	Well, I have the feeling they're serious about it. Even if they are all racists. I still don't want to go to prison, because that would throw my life completely off course.
Counsellor:	And how important is it to you that you can continue your life without going to prison? What would you no longer be able to do if you were in prison? [Question about necessity]
Client:	Very important. I don't want to go to prison. I want to continue my education and later work in a normal job and have a family. It wouldn't be worth it for me. Even if I continue to believe that we Muslims are discriminated against here.
Counsellor:	I see. So you want to campaign against discrimination, but you don't want to go to prison. [Reflection]
Client:	Yes, that would be one way to summarise it.

Counsellor: What opportunities are there to campaign against discrimination outside radical circles?

However, ambivalent clients do not always have the inclination to set off in the direction of change. It is also often the case that the status quo is discussed and that willingness to change barely comes up in the conversation. In these kinds of cases, “sustain talk” becomes relevant. The counsellor should be sensitive to signals of such entrenched attitudes and react to them at an early stage. There are various ways of dealing with this (cf. Miller/Rollnick 2015: 234ff.).

Sometimes it is enough to offer the client the opportunity to reflect on things to a greater or lesser degree in order to shift the conversation to change talk:

Example:



Client:	I don't think I have a problem with aggression.
Counsellor:	So you've never got into an argument as a result of aggression and later thought, what on earth was I doing there? [Direct reflection]
Client:	I have, actually. Just the other day, I pretty quickly ended up in a fight with a bloke at the bus stop. But he was stronger than me and I took quite a beating.

Sometimes it can also be helpful to start by recalling the client's autonomy. However, it is important to do this sincerely and authentically. It is important to remind yourself that the client's self-determination is the overarching fundamental value that must be protected at all costs – even if the client initially chooses a direction which the counsellor sees as unsuitable. The strategic component here is that there is an initial break and the counselling objective in the narrower sense is abandoned. Any confrontation which is necessary is also postponed for the time being. Nevertheless, that moment of reminding clients of their freedom of choice can also encourage them to open up to change again, with new energy for options which may be more challenging. In the same way, this strategic function is partly fulfilled by a change of topic, avoiding an impassable point in the joint process for the time being. It is important that this is not done implicitly, but openly and comprehensibly.

Examples:



- *“I think you're right. I was just thinking that I ought to try to convince you to stop meeting with these people in this way. But really it's up to you to decide whether you want*

to change this now. Because you are the one who should decide what is good for you and whether it is the right time for a change to be made.”

- *“I can see that we're not really seeing eye to eye at the moment. But that doesn't matter. We can certainly come back to this at another time. I was also thinking about something else entirely – that thing you said about your parents. I wanted to ask you ...”*

The reframing method previously introduced can also be useful for responding to sustain talk.



Example:

Client:	I don't know if I can really do that.
Counsellor:	It would be quite a challenge for you to take on.
Client:	Yes, it really would. My father would probably spend a long time explaining to me what I've done wrong.
Counsellor:	He must have been quite worried about you. There also seems to be a lot of love for you.
Client:	Yes, he did talk about his worries quite a lot, really. Do you really think he still loves me?
Counsellor:	It certainly sounds like it to me. What do you think?

However, in some counselling cases, especially in coercive contexts, it can be the case that even these kinds of interventions cannot be accepted by the client. In these cases, Miller and Rollnick recommend building some momentum. By this they mean first working out the main motives for remaining in the status quo, then exploring the disadvantages of the situation together with the client and finally asking about the benefits of change. This allows the client to feel recognised in their autonomy and current situation and to be more open to change processes.



Example:

Counsellor:	I have the feeling that you don't actually want to be here.
Client:	That's right. I'm here because I have to be. The youth welfare office and the judge are forcing me to do this.
Counsellor:	You don't understand why the youth welfare office wants you to do this.

Client:	Well, I was in Syria, you know that. But I've come back to protect my children, too.
Counsellor:	So you've been protecting your children.
Client:	Yes, absolutely. And now I'm being punished for it.
Counsellor:	You don't like it when someone interferes in your family in this way and doesn't see you as the parent. And now you have to talk to me, even though, from your perspective, there is no problem.
Client:	That's right. It's pretty unfair.
Counsellor:	So what you don't like about the situation is that other people are telling you what to do, forcing you to talk to someone about your family matters. You think the situation is being entirely misjudged and other people are making decisions about you. Is there anything else that bothers you?
Client:	You've summarised that pretty well. I think that's enough, isn't it?
Counsellor:	But now that you're here, how can I help you?
Client:	By telling the youth welfare office and the judge that everything is OK with me, so that they finally leave me alone, stay out of our lives and our family can be together in a normal way.
Counsellor:	So if you came here regularly, would that help you to have less hassle from the youth welfare office? And would you soon then be able to lead a normal family life again?
Client:	Hmm ... I think so.

Questioning techniques

The communication techniques described above clearly show the crucial importance of questions in counselling. They are an intrinsic part of every counselling session, part of the mindset (questioning mindset), they structure the process and can be integrated into the majority of all methodological approaches and exercises. In this process, every question contains an implicit suggestion for how reality could (also) be seen, which is why questions should not be underestimated as a form of intervention (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 250). What's special about systemic forms of questioning is that these are questions which are "posed in a different way to usual. They don't ask about 'things' but about the observer of those things, they don't ask about 'characteristics' but about descriptions and differences in behaviour [...], they don't ask about what 'is' but

about what is described and what other possible descriptions there could be" (ibid.: 251).

Well-posed questions can open doors for clients and reveal new perspectives. The systemic counsellor Carmen Kindl-Beilfuß (2019) even says that questions can "taste like kisses". Continuing with this figurative language, bad questions can be like harsh jabs or blows for clients. Questions are therefore a powerful but also risky tool in counselling which should be used in a targeted and prudent manner. As a general principle, suitable questions can be recognised by the fact that they are open-ended. They cannot simply be answered with "yes" or "no" and there is no clear pre-existing answer, in contrast to multiple-choice, rhetorical or suggestive questions, for example.



Examples of closed questions

- *"How long have you been in Germany?"*
- *"What do you want me to do – help you get out of prison? Or do you want me to support you in renouncing extremism?"*
- *"Don't you think it would be better for you if you just confessed to what you did?"*
- *"You don't really expect to get away with it, do you?"*

Of course, closed questions cannot always be avoided. However, they should primarily be used to query facts and even then should only be used in moderation. Otherwise, counselling processes arise in which questions are only followed by short, factual answers which provide insight for neither clients nor counsellors, causing frustration and therefore not supporting change processes. This can even lead to a breakdown in the relationship and thus to the end of the counselling process (cf. Miller/Rollnick 2015: 87) because clients may be reminded of situations during which they were interrogated. This is particularly important to bear in mind if the clients have already had negative experiences with investigating police authorities.

Open-ended questions, on the other hand, invite clients to reflect on and empathise with issues and often lead them to a new perspective on their current challenges.



Examples of open-ended questions:

- *"How did you become religious?"*
- *"Where do you think this path in life that you are currently on will lead you?"*
- *"When you think about what your life could be like in two years' time, what changes would you hope to see?"*

- “What kind of help would you like from me?”

In systemic counselling, a basic distinction is usually made between questions which are intended to find out what the current context is (reality construction) and questions which are used to look for change, new possibilities and solutions to challenges (possibility construction). “Being able to swap back and forth between the two makes up much of the art of systemic interviewing: one walks through these inner ‘spaces’, so to speak, and determines their dimensions” (von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 257). The most important of these special questioning techniques are briefly explained below.

Questioning techniques:

- Narrative enquiry
- Observation and hypothesis questions
- Scaling questions
- Circular questions
- Coping questions and exception questions
- Resource questions and what-is-this-good-for questions
- Deterioration questions and worst-case questions
- Improvement questions, the miracle question and best-case questions

Narrative enquiry

Forms of narrative and narrative-enhancing questioning are a fundamental element of almost all forms of counselling and therapy. Narrative questions are always aimed at encouraging the other person to recount personal experiences – first-hand, so to speak. In this way, the experience can be explored and understood in a new and deeper way. This effect of retelling personal experiences can be explained by the fact that when we retell experiences, we always relive them to a certain extent. This also provides the opportunity to “work through” the experience again. In this way, what was an intense experience at the time can be perceived more accurately, stressful and possibly traumatic parts can be softened through mental and emotional follow-up, and joyful and solution-orientated aspects can come into the foreground. It is also possible that each retelling of a particular experience will lead to further insights and realisations. Thus, psychotherapy is actually nothing more than telling the same story over and over again, except that, in

the end, the story can be told much better, in a more complete and more personal way. The same also applies to counselling. Just as the healing function of storytelling is spoken of within therapy, the recounting of experiences also has the function of providing insights within counselling, enabling personal change.

The techniques of narrative enquiry have been developed within the social science methodology of biographical-narrative interviewing, amongst other areas (see Kötting 2014 for details). They are therefore an integral part of therapy and counselling. When implementing these techniques during conversations with clients, the counsellor should pay attention to when and how spontaneous indications arise which indicate that their clients are to some extent consciously thinking about a particular experience. The practitioner, whose interest and curiosity will then have been aroused, tries to pick up on these clues by means of a targeted narrative enquiry and initiate the recounting of this experience. This can be particularly effective when clients speak predominantly in an argumentative and opinionated manner, as opinions and arguments usually also contain personal experiences.

The practical techniques for this approach show the ways in which “How?” questions and situation questions should be asked and how justification questions and “Why?” questions should be avoided. This is because the latter usually give rise to arguments and theories that tend to take the account away from the personal experience, whilst asking how allows access to the client’s original and meaningful experiences.



Example:

Client:	People here in Germany have no respect for old people. [Argument]
Counsellor:	Ah, I think I know what you mean! Can you perhaps tell me about a situation that you have experienced and where you would say: yet another example of how people have no respect for old people? [Situation question]
Client:	Yes, it was in the clubhouse the other day. There was somebody ...
Counsellor:	OK, how exactly did this come about? What exactly was said? Tell me what happened, step by step? How did you feel about it at the time? And what happened afterwards? ¹⁹ [Narrative enquiry]
Client:	I was actually only there because ... he kept saying that ... So, in the end, I was the only person who said anything against it.
Counsellor:	Have you had similar experiences before? And what were those experiences like, exactly? [Narrative enquiry]

Observation and hypothesis questions

In counselling, there is an art to asking questions which relate to observations, and which may even contain hypotheses, and putting them to the client. When it comes to hypotheses, however, there is a higher risk of being perceived by clients as insensitive or abusive, as this can easily overstep the client’s personal boundaries regarding what can be said or what is thinkable. This is often the case when such hypotheses are accompanied by knowing or even judgemental gestures of expertise and/or when their scope extends beyond the work assignment, as is often the case with hypotheses. Such hypotheses sometimes have the function of reinforcing the expert status of practitioners, but they do not lead to new insights and they also jeopardise the counselling process. Observations and hypotheses should therefore always be offered with great caution and in the form of possibilities (cf. Caby/ Caby 2017b: 33) so that they can be assessed by the clients, as well as rejected. It is only when clients have this freedom to scrutinise things for themselves that new thought structures emerge, which in turn can lead to new approaches to solutions.

Examples:

“Observing you like this, I have an idea about why you sometimes don’t understand yourself. Could I share this with you and you tell me if it makes any sense to you?”

“You seem very sad to me right now, would you like to talk about it?”

“I may be wrong. But could it be that your son also wants to provoke you by converting to Islam?”

In this series of hypothesis-led questions, the degree of boldness increases such that the last of the questions is most likely to challenge the client. In these cases, more caution is required and the relationship already developed must be even more solid. It is often advisable to initially make a note of such observations, wait a while and see whether they are confirmed during later sessions and whether they can be addressed.

The more questions counsellors ask, the more the direction of the counselling process can sometimes end up being limited. It is therefore a good idea to alternate questions with reflections (see above) to make the client’s process of self-exploration more open and appealing. Miller and Rollnick (2015: 86ff.), the founders of motivational interviewing, point out in this context that a good conversation often resembles the triple metre of a waltz: two reflections are followed by a question.

In addition to open questions, systemic therapy in particular



© The narrative questions here are to be understood as options.

has produced or classified a large number of questioning techniques that can be used for exit counselling and social environment counselling in the context of religiously motivated extremism. These include scaling and circular questions, coping and exception questions, resource questions, deterioration and improvement questions and the miracle question, all of which are presented below.

Scaling questions

Scaling questions are a useful tool for making nuanced assessments of current life situations with clients. They can also be used to discuss advances and setbacks within the counselling process and to make the personal development of clients tangible. The client is asked questions for which they are supposed to make an assessment using a rating scale of, for example, 1 to 10. The rating scale makes it easy to address even small-scale improvements and deterioration. At the same time, there should also be a discussion with the clients about the personal significance they attach to a particular scale value. This is because a 6 could be a very good score for some people, whereas for others, this rating could be perceived as clearly negative. Practitioners should therefore accept from the outset that people’s needs, goals and values can be measured and interpreted in different ways (cf. Lindemann 2020: 139).

Example:

Counsellor:	Looking at your life at the moment, how satisfied are you with it? Can I ask you to rate this on a scale of 1 to 10? 1 would mean very unhappy and 10 “It couldn’t be better”.
Client:	Right now ... (pause). Perhaps a 4. On some days even a 5.
Counsellor:	And what does a 4 mean to you? Can you give me an idea of why you are giving your life a 4 at the moment?
Client:	Well, it’s not going the way I would like it to. Somehow I’m not making any real progress. I still don’t have an apprenticeship, I’m constantly treated unfairly because I’m a Muslim, I still live at home and then there’s the stress with the police ... And now I have to talk to you as well.
Counsellor:	I see. There’s a lot going on in your life right now that’s depressing you. However, you also mentioned that there are days when you feel a little better and see yourself as being on a 5. What is different on those days?
Client:	Yes, those are the days when I can also enjoy being spoilt at home by my mother and when the trouble with the police doesn’t matter to me.



Counsellor:	And what could you do to make yourself feel so good long-term that you would give yourself a long-term 5?
Client:	Well, an apprenticeship would be a good start, I think. But that is unrealistic. Nothing is going to change anyway.
Counsellor:	So you have the feeling that you can't change anything in your life.
Client:	Yes.
Counsellor:	OK. And what could you do to make yourself feel even worse at our next appointment, so that you would say, now I'm on a 3?
Client:	Huh? (short silence) Well, for example, I could ... really provoke the police, then they'd probably hassle me even more.
Counsellor:	And how exactly could you do that?
Client:	I could, for example, commit a crime and steal something. Or really insult them the next time I see them. Or ...
Counsellor:	I can see you're not short of ideas. And can you see now that you do actually have possibilities when it comes to changing your life after all? With this new insight and energy, let's take another look together at how we could turn that 4 into a 5 in your life.

The enquiries make it possible to home in on the client's specific life situation and subjective assessments. This makes the client's life situation more tangible not only for the counsellor, but also for the client. In many cases, this categorisation is what makes it possible to assess the current situation in the first place. This is especially true for clients who find it difficult to talk about their feelings (at the beginning of the counselling process or in general). They might answer the open question of how they are doing with "I don't know". Scaling, on the other hand, creates a degree of distance and a tangible categorisation. It can provide a framework within which it is easier to talk about the associated perceived possibilities and impossibilities, and most especially about feelings. As shown in the example, it can occasionally help in the counselling process to talk about negative evaluations or setbacks when scaling (see also deterioration questions). This may have a particularly positive effect and spark the client's interest if their personal motivation has not yet been clarified and consolidated. It also helps clients to develop a greater appreciation for their current situation or be encouraged to rediscover the options available to them.

© Virginia Satir distinguishes four types of communication stances which people typically adopt in conflict situations: placater, blamer, computer and distractor. For those who use them, these forms of communication represent survival strategies (cf. Satir 1994).

Circular questions

No other technique epitomises systemic work as much as circular questioning. The main aim of this technique is to enable clients to gain new perspectives and reflections through the imaginary inclusion of people who may be present or absent. Clients are encouraged to form hypotheses about how other people would describe and possibly evaluate certain situations in their lives. This method is particularly suitable if relationship conflicts arise, for example between parents and children. Circular questioning can then help the client to develop a greater understanding of other positions, to clarify and put an end to contradictions and to recognise resources within relationship and conflict systems (cf. Caby/Caby 2017b: 57).

Second-order circular questions are also of particular interest. With these, the client is encouraged to consider not only what another person might think or feel, but also to reflect upon another person's perception of a third person. This can give the client entirely new perspectives on current situations, which in turn can generate new perspectives on solutions to challenges.



Examples:

- *"If your son were with us in counselling today, what problem would he describe to me that currently exists in your home?"* [First-order circular question]
- *"If I were to ask the police why they think it would be good if the two of us worked together, what do you think their answer would be?"* [First-order circular question]
- *"What do you think your daughter would tell me if I asked her what your son thinks is good about the current situation at home?"* [Second-order circular question]

Another great advantage of circular questions is that they can also be used to gently approach the client's own feelings and perceptions. Clients who tend to rationalise²⁰ and who find it difficult to talk about their own feelings in a straightforward and open manner can find it particularly helpful to use an imaginary third person to talk about their perceptions and feelings. What is interesting about this is that although the client is asked about how someone else would assess a situation or what feelings a third person would have about a situation, the assessment is still ultimately made by the client. In doing so, they reveal something about themselves – their own assessment of the assessment made by an imaginary third party. The supposed distance ("after all, I'm not talking about myself, but about how my father would see things") can often make it easier to approach the client's own assessments.

Nevertheless, practitioners should be sensitive to the fact that no method should be “forced” on clients (e.g. by repeated questioning) if it turns out not to be functional or helpful in a particular situation. It is possible that a client may (for good reason) not want to empathise with a particular person and their thoughts, perhaps in order to maintain a healthy distance from them and thereby avoid harming themselves. In such cases it is all the more important to pay attention to such defensive reactions and at the same time to use them as an opportunity to “get on the trail” of important points within the counselling process.

Coping questions and exception questions

Many clients describe their current situation as a painful, unsolvable, permanent condition which they believe is difficult or impossible to change, and are often entrenched in their behaviour. The task of practitioners is then, together with their clients, to look for exceptions in their client’s lives in which this stress is or was not present, or barely so. It is also to discuss what the clients did differently in these situations or what special circumstances may have been helpful (cf. Lindemann 2020: 141f.).

Example:

Counsellor:	When you tell me about your relationship with your daughter, I get the feeling that all you do at home is argue. When was the last time you spent a peaceful evening together?
Client:	Mmm. (Silence) Oh yes, that was a few months ago, when we cooked together. That was nice.
Counsellor:	What exactly was different and so nice about that evening?
Client:	We did something together that we both enjoy. And ...
Counsellor:	And what did you do differently to usual that evening?
Client:	...
Counsellor:	What would you need in order to be open to spending evenings like that more often? Or, to put it another way, how could you two manage to have more of these exceptional days?

It is often helpful to explore which coping strategies the clients have successfully used during crises in the past and to consider together to what extent these strategies are transferable and can also be used now (cf. Lindemann 2020: 143).



Examples:

- “Have you ever been in a similar crisis situation in your life? What did you do back then to get out of the crisis?”
- “Have you ever had stress with your son before? How did you manage to get closer to him again back then?”
- “It’s impressive how committed you are to your pupils as a teacher. Have you ever had a similar experience with another student? Who supported you in helping this student at the time? Would this support be available again today?”

Resource questions and “What is this good for?”

People rely on their resources and individual strengths to overcome challenges, crises and conflicts. Certain personal characteristics, skills or convictions and beliefs (e.g. religious attitudes) can be such resources, as can external factors which are available, e.g. through supportive people in the family or circle of friends or through access to material resources which can contribute to improvement or resolution. However, in stressful situations, clients often tend to forget the resources they have. As a result, they feel helpless and powerless. The perceived problem then overshadows everything else. The task of good counselling is to identify the client’s resources, thereby giving them back a sense of self-efficacy and opening up concrete options for taking action. Counsellors thus work with clients to turn a problem into a challenge, so to speak. Resource questions are a particularly promising means of achieving this.



Examples:

- “Right now, what personal characteristic actually helps you to deal with this situation and to not simply collapse?”
- “What skills did your parents give you to deal with crises?”
- “What or who has helped you to overcome crises in the past?”
- “Who supported you? What kind of support was particularly valuable to you?”
- “Who are your role models and why? What characteristic or ability of these people would help you to cope better with the current situation?”

Occasionally, practitioners encounter people, both during the direct counselling of index clients and in the index clients' social environment, who on the one hand articulate a desire for change but on the other contribute to the maintenance of the status quo with their behaviour. Other clients may not articulate any desire for change at all. In these cases, it can be helpful for practitioners to discuss with their clients which functions and subjective benefits the current situation may have for them. Does a current behaviour which indicates radicalisation perhaps create advantages, such as attention that may have previously been missing for index clients, and is there a fear that this neglect will return as soon as there are no longer any signs of radicalisation? Have the parents possibly become closer to each other again due to the radicalisation of a young person and does this fulfil a wish on the part of the client? These are understandable subjective reasons which can block change processes. They should therefore be identified and discussed. Thus, practitioners can certainly ask questions such as the following on occasion: "What is this actually good for, what's on your mind right now (i.e. the signs of possible radicalisation)?", or: "Who is most likely to benefit if you maintain the current conflicts?"

Deterioration questions and worst-case questions

Another technique to support clients who feel powerless and no longer recognise their own self-efficacy is to ask deterioration or worst-case questions. These questions encourage clients to think about how situations could deteriorate further or what could happen in the worst-case scenario. However, they should be used carefully and properly introduced. This is because they can also lead to people feeling even more depressed than before, or even "taking action", i.e. cynically acting out the negative behaviours mentioned in the scenario in a fit of pique. However, many clients find it easier to say what they could do to make situations worse than to describe what would be necessary to improve them. On being asked about the potential for deterioration, they have the opportunity to contribute to the conversation as effective agents, which can be used in a second step to recognise positive and sustainable options for action. They may also recognise what they need to avoid at all costs (cf. Lindemann 2020: 146f.). At the same time, deterioration questions can help to change or broaden a person's view of their own situation (see also the section on reframing for further details). It can be a relief, sometimes, to realise that a situation could be "even worse", as this might make the current situation feel less drastic. If, as a result, the pressure on the client eases off a little, it is often easier to come up with positive perspectives and solutions. The path out of misery will often be perceived as less long and arduous if the starting point is moved "higher up" than it was before. This is

²⁴ The technique of consciously outlining the worst of all imagined consequences in order to distance oneself from them is also known from cognitive behavioural therapy.

particularly the case when clients outline what would happen in the worst-case scenario. It can be helpful to realise how far they still have to go to get there, or to resolve to take preventative action to avoid such a fate. After all, it is often the fear of the worst-case scenario that influences people's actions and sets limits to them.²¹ Realising this can broaden the client's horizon regarding their wishes, actions and existing resources and set change processes into motion.



Examples:

- "Now, it might seem a strange question, but I would like to ask you: what could you do to make your son turn away from you even more?"
- "How could you make the police think you're even more dangerous?"
- "What could you do to really mess things up with your daughter?"
- "Suppose you were to carry on as before, what would that change?"
- "What would happen in a worst-case scenario? What would your life look like then?"



Improvement questions, the miracle question and best-case questions

Deterioration questions are the counterpart to improvement questions. Both can be particularly well combined with scaling questions, as this questioning technique makes ideas, wishes, scenarios and emotional states very tangible. Improvement questions are aimed at looking for possible solutions which involve small steps, as well as at deriving possible higher goals.



Examples:

- "How would you be able to notice it if your situation improved a little bit?"
- "What could you do to reduce the feeling of fear a little?"
- "What steps would be necessary to get closer to the wish/goal you described?"

The miracle question is another special technique of systemic counselling. Sometimes a problem seems so extreme that it

is difficult to even think of solutions. Solutions then seem like miracles. By imagining a successful and satisfying future, the client is encouraged to develop an idea for action and thereby move out of problem-centred neediness. The miracle question should always be introduced carefully by practitioners and seen more as a one-off tool in the counselling process, as otherwise it quickly wears out and will no longer be taken seriously by clients.

Example:

"I would like to ask you an unusual question and ask you to just go along with it. Imagine that a miracle happens tonight while you are asleep and dreaming. The miracle is that the problem that brought you to me has been solved. But you don't know this because you were asleep. So how would you notice that the miracle had happened? What would be different?"

Practitioners should pay attention to details in the client's response or ask about them in order to obtain as precise a picture as possible of the client's wishes and to recognise how these could be translated into concrete options for action (de Shazer/Dolan 2020: 76ff.). For example, the answer "My child would then no longer be radical" should not simply be left unexamined. Instead, practitioners should ask clients how they would detect their departure from radicalisation. Clients might, for example, describe having breakfast together again and talking about topics other than religion. Such detailed descriptions can then be used to derive achievable interim goals and initial approaches to solving a problem situation which was previously perceived as unsolvable. In this context, combining the miracle question and circular questions is also useful. This can give rise to specific needs and ultimately to potential for change.

Examples:

- *"Who apart from you would be the first to notice the change?"*
- *"How would your son recognise and describe the miracle that has occurred?"*
- *"How would the police know that the miracle had happened? Would they then no longer want to watch you?"*

With best-case questions, clients are also offered an alternative reality, which helps the client and the counsellor to examine together to what extent elements of this alternative situation are really desired and how they could be transferred into the current life situation (cf. Lindemann 2020: 144).



Examples:

- *"Suppose your parents were more important to you than they are now, what would be different then?"*
- *"Assuming you would not be rejected or discriminated against by employers because of your faith, where would you like to apply for a job?"*
- *"What could you do right now to surprise your family in a positive way?"*
- *"In the best-case scenario, what would happen if you engaged in this counselling with me?"*

Summary

The tools presented in Chapter 6 comprise a wealth of skills which, together with the mindset presented in Chapter 4, primarily achieve their desired effect in combination with different dialogue and questioning techniques. Ultimately, this is the art of successful counselling. At the same time, however, the multitude of possibilities illustrates the flexibility, variability and diversity of solution-orientated ways in which practitioners and clients can work together. It also shows how crucial it is for practitioners to try things out, to get to know themselves better and to be more aware of their own abilities. Training and internalising individual communication and questioning techniques is therefore also extremely beneficial for professional development. It is also helpful to do this outside actual counselling practice, because those who practise with colleagues, for example, will be less afraid to try out techniques which may at first seem unusual. In this way, apart from receiving direct feedback, third-party observations from peers can also be obtained.

Notes:

- Everything within an interactive counselling process is communication and therefore important for counselling. This presents both challenges and opportunities in the choice of possible communication and questioning techniques.

- Different communication and questioning techniques – in combination with a relationship-orientated approach – make for a successful counselling process. It is crucial to constantly train and internalise the special techniques and methods and to combine them in a target-orientated way.

- The responsibility for the success of a counselling process does not lie solely with the counsellor. The client has an influence on how the case proceeds, for example by accepting or rejecting certain techniques and methods. Failures and successes therefore both form part of the process of trying out different communication and questioning techniques. It is crucial that practitioners deal with mistakes constructively in order to be able to make use of them in a beneficial way in their counselling and their own personal and professional development.

Session Topics

Kim Lisa Becker, Tobias Meilicke and Annabelle Mattick

If we turn our attention now to how the counselling process develops, and the specific issues that can arise within the context of radicalisation prevention and intervention, we can see a wide range of potential challenges and approaches. In this chapter we will therefore outline specific exercises and methods that counsellors can use based on possible session topics – starting at the beginning of the counselling process, then dealing with various topics and focal points, before moving on to the conclusion of the counselling process. The session topics and exercises should be taken as examples and suggestions of how various issues in radicalisation prevention and intervention can be dealt with in a way that focusses on solutions and the resources available. In terms of practical application, several topics or exercises could be combined, and individual exercises could also be used in other counselling scenarios.

Target group and setting: which exercises will suit which counsellor and client?

Not all methodological approaches and practical exercises will suit every counsellor and client. It is therefore important that the counsellor feels comfortable with the chosen approach and can freely and authentically invite the client to participate in the exercise selected. Individual counsellors may therefore consciously avoid using certain approaches and exercises, perhaps because they reject the approach for personal reasons, or they feel that the specific approach seems too therapeutic and they wish to offer clients an alternative one. They may also feel unsure about carrying out the exercise without appropriate training and the associated self-awareness. These are valid reasons for intentionally deciding not to use individual approaches or exercises, and may even strengthen the counsellor's own approach to their work.

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this field of work, this book should be taken as representing a section of the wide range of competences available nationally, and counsellors are encouraged to use it and benefit from it. Although the presentation of different methodological approaches, topics and exercises is intended to prompt counsellors to try new approaches, they can and should make their own conscious choices from the wide selection offered. In particular, if the approaches and exercises that have been used to date have failed to yield the desired success with an individual client or are met with resistance, it may be worth trying out a new approach or direction. Reflection questions to guide the counsellor's actions might be:

- Which methodological approach is a good fit for me, my mindset and my way of working?
- What are the areas of my work where I would like to develop my professional skills and perhaps try something new? What new approaches can I envisage myself offering and using in my counselling practice?
- Which topics and goals am I currently working on with my client and which (new) approaches or exercises might be helpful?

Whether it is feasible to introduce a particular exercise naturally also depends on the specific setting. In addition to space and time limitations which may influence whether an exercise would be easy to implement or could only be used in a modified and adapted form, other factors also play a role. For many of the methodological approaches and exercises requiring clients to engage in intensive self-examination, a stable and trusting working relationship must already exist between the counsellor and the client. Only then is an exercise likely to be accepted and have a positive effect. Counsellors can and should listen to their gut feeling and, if in doubt, consult their colleagues or supervisor in advance for advice (→ 8).

In addition, counsellors often have to deal with varying groups of clients. Some exercises are particularly suitable for the “index client”  (→ 5.1) – the person who is the subject of extremism or radicalisation – while others are more appropriate for working with relatives or those in the index client’s close social environment . Others may be suitable for specialist counselling, i.e. provided by other professionals  whose work directly or indirectly involves contact with the index client. The exercises are generally designed to be used with individuals, but most can also be used in a modified form in couples, group or family counselling. Ultimately, the client decides, together with the counsellor, whether an exercise is suitable for them.

Inviting a client to complete an exercise

If a counsellor decides to use a (new) exercise, it is important to ensure that the invitation to the client to complete the exercise is presented in an appropriate way. This can be done in an individual, personal way, using a different form of words, depending on who the counsellor is working with. As a rule, counsellors should act intuitively here and adjust their approach to the person they are counselling. In their counselling work, they can develop a feeling for this and learn to assess the best way to formulate such an invitation. However, it should be made clear that the invitation can be accepted or declined. After all, an exercise only has a positive effect if it is carried out on a transparent, voluntary basis. To this end, it can be helpful for

the counsellor to specifically outline the open nature of the exercise when issuing the invitation, for example by presenting the exercise as a joint experiment to find out whether a new perspective on or approach to resolving the current issues can be found. It may also be helpful to explain that this may confirm and reinforce an existing approach to the solution. The more transparent, open and authentic the counsellor’s invitation to the (new) exercise is, the more successful its effects are likely to be. The aim here is never to provide “perfect” counselling or “perfect” implementation of the respective method or exercise, since the counselling itself is a process aimed at the client approaching and developing towards fulfilment of their overarching and self-imposed goals with regard to direct or indirect distancing, deradicalisation or exiting. Part of this process can be realising that an exercise is not suitable, as well as receiving feedback from the client about feeling uncomfortable with an exercise or feeling that they are not making progress, and the opportunity to discuss and reflect on setbacks (→ 7.8).

Some of the session topics and exercises that follow provide examples of how to formulate such an invitation. Like the exercises themselves, these are to be taken as suggestions which will naturally need to be individually adapted and supplemented by the counsellor in each case.

Time factor in the counselling process

The amount of time counsellors and clients have or can have for the counselling process depends to a large extent on factors impacting the individual setting (→ 5.1). Counsellors and counselling centres have different frameworks here and may offer different flexible arrangements, which in turn may benefit the individual needs and concerns of different clients. The duration of a counselling session in an enforcement context is often determined externally; in other scenarios, counsellors or counselling centres tend to offer clear time frames, generally of between one and one and a half hours per session. This is agreed with the client at the outset. The intervals between counselling sessions may also vary in length, depending on the client’s needs. The exercises presented below with the session topics are based on a period of approx. one and a half hours for a counselling session. On this basis, a distinction is made between:

1. Short exercises 

2. Session exercises  and

3. Longer exercises .

Short exercises can be interwoven into one or more counselling sessions (including repeatedly) and generally do not require an entire session. Session exercises, on the other hand, are more suitable for an entire counselling session, while longer exercises can extend over several counselling sessions, e.g. because they require a longer preparation time and follow-up. Classifying the exercises in this way is intended as a helpful guide for practitioners. They can also be adapted, shortened or extended according to each individual case. However, it is highly advisable to allow sufficient time for exercises that require clients to engage in intensive self-examination and reflection, and not to unduly restrict the methods and exercises nor the time required for them, as this could jeopardise the actual objectives and have a counterproductive effect. Some of the exercises can also be given as “homework” to be completed by the next session and then reflected on by the counsellor and client together 🗨️.

Materials for individual exercises

It should be understood that the counsellor themselves, their mindset and the discussion and questioning techniques they use represent the first intervention and the most important method within the counselling process. There are also exercises that may require additional materials or people, e.g. for sculpture or constellation work (→ 7.4). Paper (e.g. flipchart paper, lining paper, drawing pads, multicoloured sets of moderation cards) and pens (e.g. flipchart markers, coloured pencils) or special notebooks or writing paper are also required for some of the exercises. At the start of each exercise there is therefore a short note for the counsellor regarding the recommended materials for carrying out the exercise. There are also templates for some of the exercises; these can be found in the appendix to this book (→ 12).

Languages in the counselling session

In some cases, counsellors and clients may not share the same first language or it may not be possible to (fully) communicate with each other in a common language. Counselling centres in Germany generally cater for a wide range of languages, for example, English, Arabic or Turkish; however, it may still be necessary to engage an interpreter in individual cases. If the counsellor and client are able to make themselves understood, but a deeper level of understanding is difficult or impossible due to language barriers, exercises that use only limited or simple language may be more suitable. Exercises that focus on physical movement or materials for visualisation, and so rely less on spoken language, are therefore marked accordingly 🗨️.

Dealing with uncertainties and setbacks

All the exercises and case study examples featured in the session topics are to be taken as sample representations intended as a guide to how individual exercises might be applied, the dynamics which may develop and how the counsellor can provide useful guidance during the exercises. They should not in any way be taken as scripts that can be transferred directly, used by counsellors in exactly the same way as here or learnt by heart. Instead, we advise that practitioners find their own form of words and their own personal focus and priorities, and explore these together with their clients. This is ultimately the approach that constitutes an internalised mindset as described in Chapter 4 (→ 4).

At this point we would like to again emphasise that the role of this book is solely to provide suggestions so that the counsellor can consciously reflect on this professional attitude. A handbook cannot hope to replace training or learning with and from colleagues, nor can it be a substitute for case experience. At best, it can only complement these. The feeling that an exercise has failed, encountering resistance from a client or realising that next time you would do the exercise completely differently are all part of being a counsellor, and are, to a certain extent, completely normal. Making a mistake can also open up the opportunity to develop – professionally and personally. This makes continuous self-reflection, dialogue with colleagues and supervision all the more important (→ 8), as that can help counsellors to be better able to deal with fears, excessive demands and pressure. It is very important here to explore the professional closeness that develops between the counsellor and the client, which is necessary for building a trusting working relationship. At the same time, it is vital to maintain a professional distance that gives both the counsellor and the client the certainty of secure boundaries. Depending on the case concerned, intensive professional reflection may also be needed.

Task Clarification and Setting Goals

At first glance, the objectives and remit of the work of counselling centres in the context of religiously motivated extremism appear to be quite clear: the societal mandate is to deradicalise clients (→ 5.2). Counselling is intended to support an individual in distancing themselves from extremist attitudes or at least prevent the perpetration of violence. In practice, however, this is not generally how people who contact counselling centres formulate the issue. Parents, for example, often come with the desire to “get their old child back”, reduce the stress at home or protect their child. Index clients, on the other hand, may be hoping that, by seeking counselling, they will experience less pressure from others’ repressive behaviour or from the authorities. Schools and youth welfare professionals may aim to reintegrate the index client into democratic structures and at the same time protect the client’s peer group. In addition, referral institutions such as the courts should also be mentioned here; these may judge that the aim of the counselling is to prevent further offences. Expectations of the counselling process may therefore be very different and can sometimes vary greatly between the various stakeholders. In some cases, the hoped-for outcome from the counselling is stated explicitly at the outset; in other cases, it may not at first be obvious.

For counselling to be successful, the client and the counsellor must first together find a clear, common goal. This goal, in turn, must be checked to ensure it is compatible with the societal mandate of deradicalisation, as this mandate has the highest priority, is the primary goal of the counselling centres’ work and forms the basis of their being publicly funded. Setting a goal or goals can take varying amounts of time – it may be achieved within the first one or two counselling sessions, or it may take longer and need to be modified, supplemented or adjusted during the course of the counselling process. The counsellor, who also sets the framework for the structure during the initial process (→ 3.7) and helps the client to find their bearings, should therefore not rush things, but allow as much time as possible, depending on the client’s availability and external structural constraints. The pace must be jointly and transparently agreed with the client(s) (→ 5.2). It is therefore advisable to take sufficient time for the process of task clarification with all those involved and not start the actual counselling too quickly. Otherwise, the client’s wishes and expectations could be ignored, leading to frustration and, in the worst case, a breakdown in the relationship

and the counselling process. Moreover, if the objectives are unclear, it can be much more difficult for counsellors to review progress or setbacks (→ 7.8).

Based on the work of the systems theorist Wolfgang Loth (1998), it is helpful to use the following four successive steps when setting the goals:



Joint goal-setting in four steps:

1. Event
2. Issue
3. Task
4. Contract

Initial contact from clients is often sparked by a specific event – for example, someone in their environment making derogatory or hostile comments, or their teenage child converting to Islam. Clients then contact counselling centres with a specific concern. This could be how to stop the child’s undesirable behaviour or how to better cope with the acute stress situation in which they find themselves. It is important for the counselling process that the issue is defined as precisely as possible. Systemic questioning techniques (such as the “wonder” or “miracle” question) (→ 6.3) can be used. If there is more than one client or if several stakeholders are involved in the counselling process, it may also be helpful to make the different expectations visible and present them for discussion. Circular questions are one way of doing this.



Examples:

- “What do you think the judge was hoping for in sending you here to me for counselling?”
- “When do you think that the state security service would consider our work together as successfully completed? How would they recognise that?”
- “If your son were here today, what would his goal be with regard to the counselling?”
- “Your wife urged you to come to this counselling session. What do you think she hopes for from this counselling?”

A client’s concerns often prompt them to make requests of the counsellor or express wishes, but that is often done indirectly. In such cases, counsellors should have the confidence to ask the

client specific questions about their wishes, including in regard to the counsellor's own role. This is the only way for the counsellor to compare these expectations to their own skills, options for action and mindset, and also to ascertain whether they are able to fulfil the client's mandate and (literally or figuratively) enter into a contract (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 238). For example, the desire and mandate to work on improving communication and the relationship between mother and son may well be in line with the deradicalisation mandate. The desire and mandate to receive help with visits to the authorities may, on the other hand, represent a first step in building relationships and trust, but if the mandate remains at this level in the long term, there may be problems if it is ultimately not possible to counteract radicalisation in this way.

It is important that the tasks resulting from this process of clarification are fixed and recorded by the counsellor (→ 5.1), so that they remain at the forefront in the course of the process and if further tasks arise. This is also important in terms of being able to subsequently reflect on the extent to which the counselling process has been able to meet the objectives, any changes and hence improvements that may be necessary and whether the task clarification may need to be modified and readjusted (→ 7.8). There are various methods that can help with task clarification. These include mind maps, tables, the "From problem to solution" exercise, the "Wheel of life" exercise (particularly for multi-problem situations) and the "Head, heart and gut" exercise.

Mind maps and tables for task clarification

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper (flipchart sheet or multicoloured moderation cards) or whiteboard, pens (preferably different colours)

It may be helpful to work out the four steps together with clients in a mind map, particularly in counselling situations that initially seem opaque. The four steps lead from the event through to the issue/concern, and on to the task and the contract. Different materials can be used depending on the counselling setting. The mind map can be written/drawn with pens on paper (preferably in different coloured pens) in a large format on a flipchart sheet, if possible. Alternatively, whiteboards or colourful moderation cards can be used. Cards have the advantage that they can be arranged and (re)sorted as desired on a table or pinboard.

This provides more scope for customisation. Alternatively, the four steps and the respective participants or perspectives can also be presented in a table:

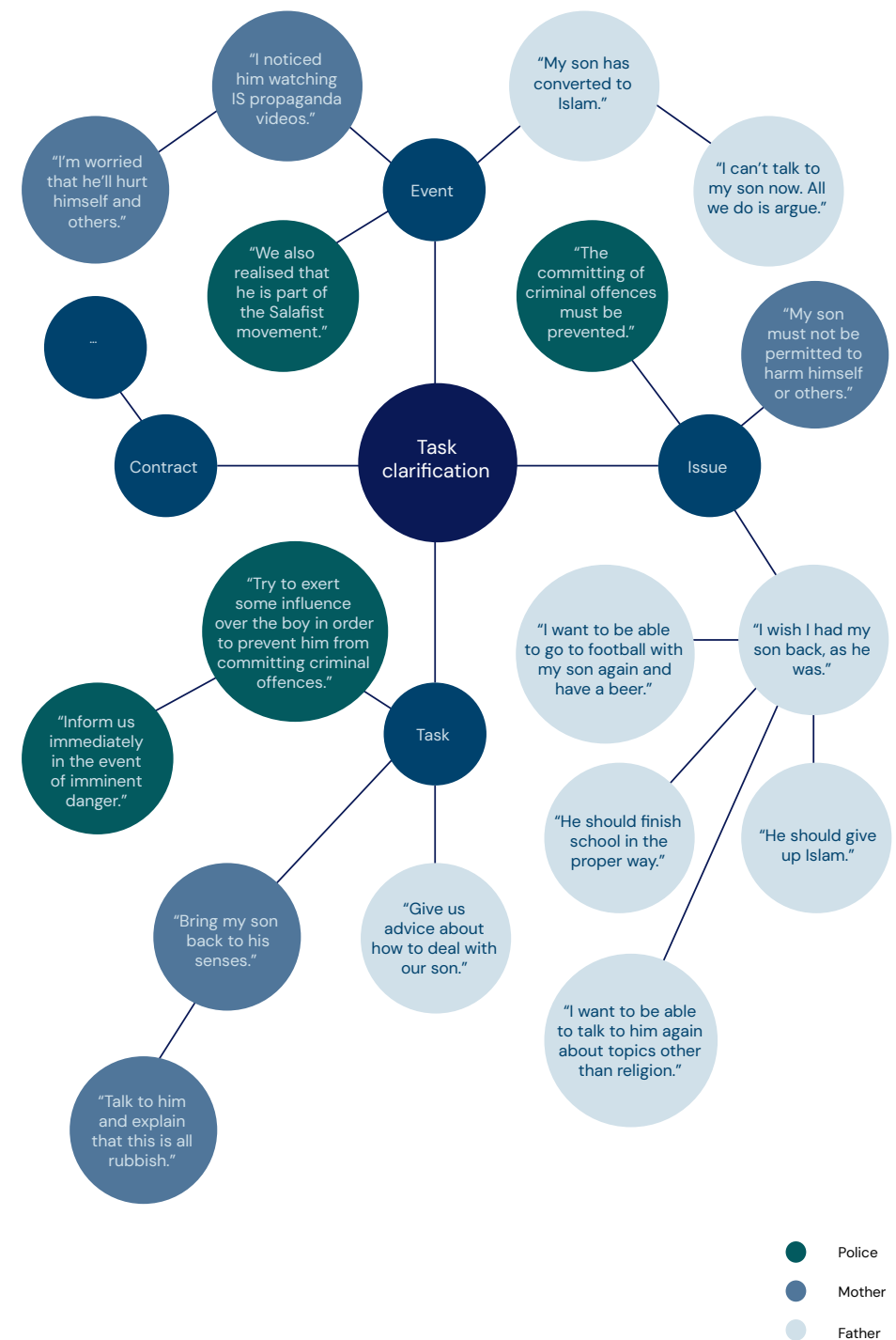


Fig. 3: Example: Mind map

	Event	Issue	Task	Contract
Mother				
Father				
State security service				
...				

Table 2: Task clarification using a table

Writing down clients' concerns means they are fully recorded and taken into account in the counselling processes. But it is not the case that every task that is written down must and should be accepted by the counsellor. Tasks where clients do not want to make a contribution themselves, and assume that only others should change, must be questioned and, if necessary, rejected. Counsellors can support clients in change processes, but they cannot do the work for them. Concerns that conflict with human rights or individual freedoms must also be rejected. For example, the desire of parents to have better communication with their child again or to prevent danger to themselves or others is understandable. However, if this wish is linked to the condition that the child should renounce his or her freely chosen religion, this must be critically reflected upon with the parents and this part of the task rejected. This is because the free choice of religion is protected under German law and it can therefore never be the task of a counselling centre to intentionally alienate people from their religion (→ 5.3).

Religious freedom

Both religious and non-religious worldviews and life according to them are protected by Article 4 (1) and (2) of the German Basic Law (→ 5.3). It is also important to note that the law on the religious upbringing of children provides for consideration of the child's views prior to their reaching full legal age: children may decide independently on their faith after reaching the age of 14 (Section 5 of the Law on the Religious Upbringing of Children [KERzG]). In disputes about the religious upbringing of children, the wishes of children aged 10 and upwards are heard and taken into consideration by the family courts.²²

²² For a detailed account of the constitutional freedoms and limits of religion and ideology in education, cf. Brandt/Meysen 2021.

From problem to solution

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals 

Time frame: Short exercise 

Materials: Paper, pens

Clients often tend to formulate their concerns and tasks in a problem-centred way, in the form of avoidance goals. They state what they no longer want, rather than what they hope to gain as a positive outcome from the counselling. This is of particular importance in the context of religiously motivated extremism, as often the ideology itself (→ 2.3) also fulfils the function of avoidance. For example, everyday or crisis-related problems are not resolved because this is associated with great anxiety. Instead, the ideology is (now) used to avoid facing or having to face different challenges, or no longer being permitted to tackle them. If the counsellor concentrates on the client's actual environment and focusses on existing challenges, the function of the ideology often becomes clear, and it then falls away in the process of finding a solution. For example, loneliness can lead to index clients seeking friendships, support or a substitute family in an ideology and its followers. This makes it all the more disappointing when, in the course of reflection processes, the client realises that their so-called "brothers" or "sisters" withdraw their friendship as soon as beliefs or rules are seriously questioned. If the goal is to find a solution on a different level, connected to the client's everyday life, then a cognitive opening-up (→ 2.2) is possible. This provides the basis for distancing, deradicalisation and exit processes.



Example:

"Everything you've told me so far about your religion sounds very stressful. I've heard all the things you're not allowed to do, and how much effort it takes because you always want to do everything right. Personally, I wouldn't fancy your religion at all. What benefit do you get from it – what does it help you with, specifically? What are the positive things?"

If the focus is on negative counselling goals, i.e. on what is to be avoided and prevented, there is often little motivation for clients and it can also obscure the underlying needs and wishes. Behind the goal of not arguing so much may be the need to have more positive contact with each other and to be able to talk to each other about other topics without conflict. When agreeing work goals, counsellors should therefore ensure that clients frame agreements as positive goals, or work with them to develop these.

The “From problem to solution” method offers one way of doing this. For this method, a table is drawn up with two columns labelled “*Current challenges (problems)*” and “*Goals*”. The client can then name and note down all their current challenges (related to the topic of religiously motivated extremism in the broadest sense). These challenges are then reframed together with the client, i.e. reformulated into positive goals (→ 6.3). Once this has been done for all items, the first column of the table (Challenges) can be cut away or folded over, so that only the positive objectives are visible to the client.

Example:



Challenges (problems)	Goals
All my parents and I do is argue	My parents and I have good communication now and we talk about a lot of things without arguing.
I don't have any money at the moment.	I can pay my rent myself.
I'm bored at home.	I'm going on holiday.
I don't have any transport.	I'm learning to drive.
I feel very alone at the moment.	I'm signing up for a sports club.
I haven't felt well for years.	I'm fit now and have improved my diet.

Once several goals have been identified, it is important to prioritise them together with the client according to their current importance, then to focus on one goal in greater depth, and ultimately to work through all the goals, one by one.

The Wheel of life

Target groups: Index clients

Time frame: Session exercise

Materials: Template (→ 12.1) or paper (flipchart sheet), pens

Many index clients have turned to extremist ideas and the associated community in order to escape other problems in their lives. However, such attempts at coping in the face of individual crises or conflict situations often fall short. It is not uncommon for problems to be exacerbated rather than solved

by turning to an ideology. For this reason, counsellors often encounter clients who are currently facing several challenges, where solving all of these challenges seems equally important for them to be able to distance themselves from extremist circles. Clients often jump from problem to problem while talking, without being able to address the individual problem in depth and work on a solution. Sometimes they are not even aware of all the current challenges they face. One method that can help them become aware of their current situation and make problem areas concrete and visible is the “wheel of life”. This exercise is an extension of systemic scaling questions, which can show where the client is progressing well or less well in life, or is stagnating. It can thus bring order and clarity to initially opaque (multi-)problem situations.

A template is used for this exercise (→ 12.1) or a circle can be drawn, with lines dividing it into eight equal segments. Each segment is labelled with a scale from 1 to 10, with the “1” in the centre of the circle standing for “*Disaster*” and the “10” on the perimeter for “*Everything's fine*”. Eight areas of life that are important to the client are now determined. These might include health and fitness, family, friendships, job and career, money and finances, leisure and hobbies, love and relationship, and spirituality. It is crucial here to work with the categories the client chooses for themselves and to specify as little as possible. The client then rates the categories on the given scale according to their current life situation and draws a line from point to point. The larger and rounder the shape, the higher the rating that the individual gives to their current life situation. Counsellors can also use the image of the wheel as a metaphor in the counselling process and use it to encourage the client to reflect. It is important not to start with the idea that things “should be running smoothly” for the client or are currently “not running smoothly”, i.e. that the client is not okay. Counsellors can explicitly state here that the wheel of life generally does not run smoothly in the life of anyone – including themselves. The key factor is how satisfied or dissatisfied people are with their individual “wheels” and what they would like to change, readjust or make run more smoothly. It is up to the client themselves to assess the picture; counsellors should therefore initially take a back seat here and leave it to the client to explain or categorise things. The counsellor’s appreciative attitude and the technique of asking questions about a deterioration in the situation (→ 6.3) can broaden and potentially also improve the client’s perspective on their own situation and make the desire for change tangible.

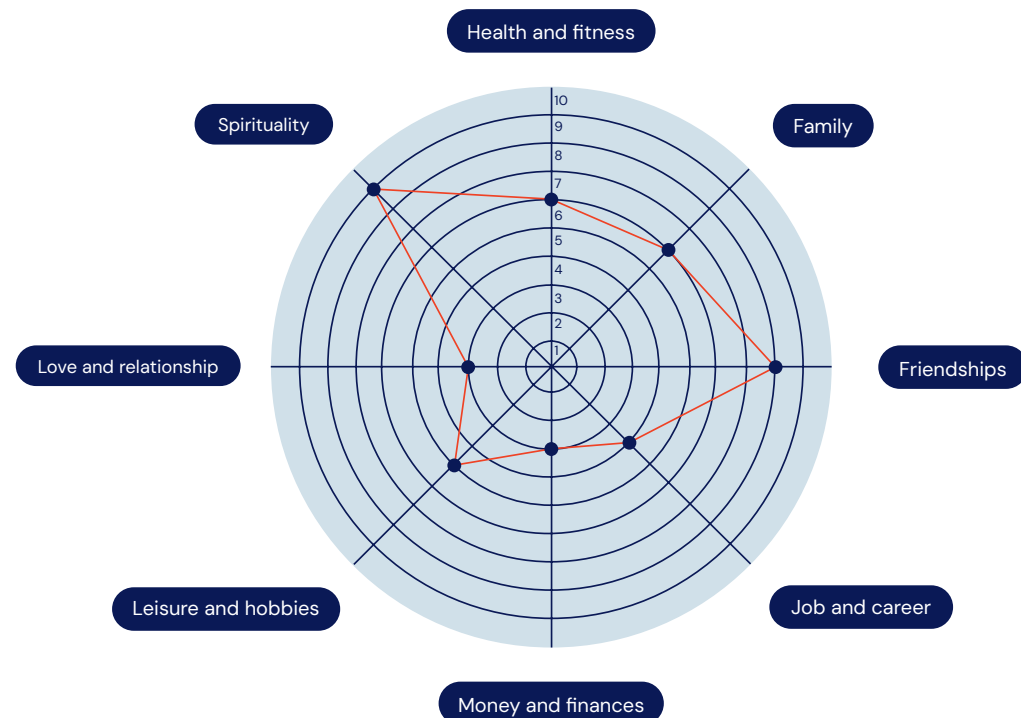


Fig. 4: Example: The wheel of life

Examples:

- "How secure would you feel riding a bicycle with a wheel like this? How smooth or bumpy would a ride on such a bicycle wheel be?"
- "When you describe how bumpy your wheel feels to you, I'm all the more impressed by how you've managed to make progress over the last few months. Where did you get this strength from? Who or what helped you?"
- "What would have to happen for you to stop making progress and get stuck?"
- "Which bits might you need to adjust to make the bicycle run more smoothly for you?"
- "What should stay as it is?"

With this exercise, it often becomes very clear to clients and counsellors in which areas of life resources can be found, and which areas are currently more challenging and may be a topic for counselling. The counsellor does not have to be responsible for dealing with all the topics – they can also make

use of a specialist referral. If, for example, addiction, substance dependency or excessive debt is involved, a referral to an appropriate specialist counselling/advice agency may be helpful.

A flexible approach to working with the wheel of life is also possible. For example, the current actual state could be drawn in first, followed by the target state (desired state) in a different colour or in a separate drawing. If used regularly, the exercise is also suitable for visualising and discussing the client's progress or setbacks (→ 7.8). A major advantage of the wheel of life in developing work assignments is that it lends itself to proceeding in small steps. It is possible to focus on just one of the two areas of life at a time, for example, or start working on smaller steps towards change. It can also be helpful to specifically ask what resources exist in the areas which the client classifies as "fairly" or "very" satisfactory. In this way, the areas of life in which the client is already coping well can be used as a basis for the changes still to come, so that, for example, available financial collateral might be invested in more leisure activities, or family members and friends might help with finding a job.



Examples:

- "When you look at the picture of the wheel, which area of your life would you most like to change first? What would it take to move from a 5 to a 6 here?"
- "What would it take for you to feel that you have moved from a 6 to a 7 in the area of ...?"
- "Who or what could support you in getting from a 4 to a 5? How could the areas in which you are satisfied with the values you've entered perhaps help you?"

Head, heart and gut

Target groups:	Index clients, relatives
Time frame:	Session exercise
Materials:	Flipchart paper or whiteboard, coloured pens

With the help of the "Head, heart and gut"²³ exercise, the counsellor can gain an insight into the client's emotional and mental world, and be able to discuss it more easily (cf. Röhrbein 2019: 89). When working with the index client, the exercise can help to provide information about "push" and "pull" factors in radicalisation, and provide initial points on which further work can or should be done. When working with parents, it is a good way of finding out more about their views and feelings, and

²³ The exercise is based on Röhrbein (2019: 87ff.) and has been adapted here for deradicalisation and disengagement work.

making their desires (for change) more tangible. The exercise is therefore also suitable as an introduction to counselling.

At the beginning, the counsellor invites the client to draw themselves as a large figure on a flipchart sheet or whiteboard (see Fig. 5). The counsellor explains that our thoughts (head) help to determine what we feel (heart) and that feelings also make themselves felt physically, e.g. in the stomach (gut). The counsellor, together with the client, groups feeling, thinking and speech bubbles in the appropriate places around the figure; individual words and statements are then entered into the bubbles, using different categories for guidance:

When I think of ...,

1. ... goes through my head ...
2. ... is important to me ...
3. ... I wish ...
4. ... I can count on ...
5. ... gives me support ...



"When I think of my daughter ..."



Fig. 5: Example of the "Head, heart and gut" exercise

Simply talking about the (suspected/imminent) radicalisation of their own child in this way can provide initial relief for parents seeking advice. It also makes it possible to discuss ambivalent and mixed feelings (→ 7.11). The wishes, feelings and needs recorded can also provide information about initial resources: where does the client feel safe and well-positioned? In addition, further areas for work and goals can be derived from them, such as: what areas can the client be encouraged and supported in? What changes do they wish for? Who or what is needed for this?

Attachment and Feelings

For a long time, in the solution-oriented systemic approach, scarcely any attention was paid to attachment and feelings. Even today, although they feature increasingly in the specialist literature, they are still generally not the focus of attention (cf. Wagner/Russinger 2016: 73f.). Attachment and feelings play an essential or overarching role in every counselling session. Approaches such as attachment narrative theory (ANT), mentalisation-based family therapy (MBT-F), attachment-based family therapy (ABFT) and emotion-focussed couple therapy (EFT) have led to explicitly emotion- and attachment-oriented approaches becoming established in practice, sometimes as part of broader approaches (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 300ff.). At the same time, counsellors and clients may (unconsciously) tend to (initially) exclude feelings from counselling sessions, in order, for example, to maintain a certain distance or because there is an implicit or explicit concern about how to deal with expressions of feelings. Counsellors therefore often ask themselves how they can best talk about feelings and how they should react when a client gets angry, cries or is afraid. Similarly, counsellors may encounter clients who come to counselling with a flood of emotions and feelings that are causing them to feel overwhelmed. Grasping and categorising these feelings can be challenging. In addition, there is sometimes a balancing act between authentic compassion and maintaining a certain distance in order to continue to offer a secure basis for the client. Mirroring is a helpful and important method here. Counsellors should also deal professionally with their own insecurities and feelings in supervision sessions (→ 8).

In order to be able to talk openly about feelings, there needs to be a secure relationship of trust between the client

and counsellor – in other words, a connection. Methods that consciously focus on this connection and on engaging with feelings can therefore be considered as overarching exercises that can be linked to all the session topics and combined with various other exercises, because a good relationship is a prerequisite for a client-centred approach (→ 3.3).

The individual bonding experience is crucial for creating a successful connection in counselling in cases where the work is focussed on the topic of bonding. The JUMP project in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, for example, has for several years used a strong attachment theory approach in its work supporting clients distancing from and exiting right-wing extremism. The basic assumption here is that “entering [it] occurs as a result of extremely unsettling experiences in childhood and adolescence, combined with opportunity structures and individual misfortune. Entries therefore tend to have a passive character. Socialisation processes that make a secure attachment to an attachment figure less likely (chronic rejection, frequent experiences of separation, incongruent behaviour of the attachment figure(s), violence, neglect) also foster compatibility with patterns of thought and action which have connotations of (right-wing) extremism. Turning to these patterns can be understood as a compensatory movement – leaving mental illness aside” (Haase/Murawa 2019: 1).



What does “attachment” mean?

Attachment theory originated in the mid-20th century and can be traced back to the work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. Bowlby developed the theory that there is an emotional bond between a (young) child and their close attachment figures (trusted persons, usually the parents), which is critically important for the individual’s development and for subsequent relationships in life (for details see Bowlby 2021).

Attachment refers more precisely to the emotional bond between the most important attachment figure and the child, whereby a distinction can be made between the attachment behaviour of the child (attachment) and the parental care behaviour (bonding). Children are born with a disposition to seek protection and comfort from selected individuals. A child’s specific attachment behaviour develops significantly over the course of the first year of life and is demonstrated by an external reaction pattern to the actual or impending loss of an attachment figure (cf. Spektrum, Lexikon der Psychologie 2000).

Ainsworth’s work followed on from that of Bowlby and, at the end of the 1960s, she developed the

“strange situation” technique to research specific infant attachment patterns. She observed the behaviour of infants aged between 11 and 18 months when their mothers were present and then absent, and when they returned. She was able to deduce three types of attachment (A, B and C) from this clinical study. A fourth type (D) was added in a later study by the psychologist Mary Main. The attachment types became established through a number of subsequent studies, and expanded and differentiated; they are still very important in attachment research and developmental psychology today.

Secure attachment (type B)

The child has experienced caring support and comfort from their attachment figure in stressful situations. The attachment figure recognises the child’s needs adequately and can respond to them. Securely attached children often have healthy self-confidence and are able to communicate and interact with others in a more complex way. They are more independent because they can rely on a solid source of comfort and support (the attachment figure).

Insecure-avoidant attachment (type A)

The child avoids the experience of immediate rejection or a negative response. This may be because they have rarely received help in stressful situations. Although the child’s stress level is increased, they do not express (or no longer express) this in corresponding situations. The consequences of this form of attachment can include a negative self-image or difficulties in showing emotions or dealing with disappointment.

Insecure-ambivalent attachment (type C)

The child has had a range of different experiences with their attachment figure. Sometimes the person responds lovingly to the child’s needs, sometimes they react dismissively. This unpredictability leads to the child trying to avoid any separation. As a result, these children can be very “clingy”, dependent, anxious and insecure.

Disorganised attachment (type D)

These children may have experienced traumas in the context of which significant emotional harm has

taken place, e.g. abuse by the attachment figure. On the one hand, the attachment figure is associated with fear for the child; on the other, they are the person who provides the child with significant care. Life-threatening emergencies in which the attachment figures were unable to attend to the child may not have been processed. There is often no common (emotional) basis between the attachment figure and the child. As a result, the child is in an ambivalent relationship of tension, is overwhelmed at the moment of separation and is only capable of rudimentary behaviour.

Even though the first year of life is particularly formative for experiencing and acquiring specific attachment patterns, attachment remains a lifelong and individual development process. Although the attachment types outlined in the above and following attachment studies can be located clinically, care should be taken when translating them into practice. Counsellors, who themselves have also experienced and internalised certain attachment patterns, may therefore take the clinical and hence typical attachment types into the counselling session as helpful background knowledge for individual cases, but should be aware that in practice these are always more complex, more differentiated and less clear-cut than is the case in clinical settings. Nevertheless, knowledge of the different types of attachment should help counsellors to empathically and consciously build a trusting relationship with the client, in order to be better able to classify behaviours and difficulties in building trust and relationships, and give them the time required. However, clinical background knowledge should in no way restrict openness to this process. The joint working relationship is formed alongside and on the basis of the individual and at times diverse attachment and relationship experiences of those involved – i.e. counsellor and client – and may therefore develop quickly, securely and continuously, or slowly and haltingly, in a way characterised by setbacks or repetitive loops.

It is also important to emphasise that the types of attachment described here do not imply any fundamental evaluation. Empirically, they merely indicate which behaviour, associated with a certain level of stress, is exhibited in each specific attachment type. It is also important to recognise that the different types have developed as an essential survival mechanism for dealing with the form of attachment available to the individual. This knowledge can be helpful for counsellors in order to better understand behaviours and any particular challenges in building a relationship and trust with the client. Equally, this knowledge can support them in finding ways and means to enter into counselling and work on feelings in different ways with clients, both in general and in depth. This is primarily about achieving a connection with the client with regard to the service provided by the counsellor – and not about an attachment between counsellor and client of the kind described by attachment theory. Internalising this distinction is important for a successful counselling process in which counsellors are aware of the goals and boundaries (closeness and distance) (→ 4.4) and reflect on them. Having a clear understanding of the importance of attachment experiences for counselling is just as helpful and important as being aware that counselling is largely about providing professional support in (re-)establishing relationships in the client's social systems. The shaping/formation of these relationships is the responsibility of the clients themselves, and not the counsellor. Ultimately, the question that counsellors ask is how they can help clients to “be free of them” again (Conen/Cecchin 2020).

In the context of their work, counsellors will encounter clients who have internalised different attachment patterns. These types of attachment represent tendencies, but in practice one cannot always be clearly distinguished from another. An insecure-avoidant attachment type (A) can manifest, for example, in the client having difficulty developing a solid commitment to the counsellor and therefore finding it difficult to express thoughts and feelings openly. These individuals also sometimes have a negative image of themselves without being open about it. The insecure-ambivalent attachment type (C), on the other hand, may exhibit inconsistent and ambivalent behaviour in the relationship with the counsellor. Such clients sometimes react anxiously and insecurely to interruptions and separations, and may become dependent rather than developing a sense of commitment. The insecure-disorganised attachment type (D), which occurs much less frequently, can also pose particular challenges. Such clients often have very confused reactions and at times exhibit major mood swings. According to research, it seems that those affected were probably traumatised in early childhood and were not given the opportunity to process the trauma successfully. The complexity of the types mentioned shows that this handbook is not intended to replace further in-depth training, but only encourage it.

Nevertheless, a general knowledge of the types of attachment described here is valuable for successful counselling. In particular, counsellors should ask themselves how much attachment security a client needs in order to be able to open up at the beginning of the counselling process (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 301). Useful questions for counsellors to reflect on here could be:

- What is the person's stress level or stimulation potential in the counselling session?
- What level of stimulation and dialogue can the client cope with?

This is all the more important because starting counselling should be a voluntary and self-motivated act. This means that the counsellor's attitude and the setting for the counselling session should not only provide a safe space, but should also be designed as a place of personal well-being – especially for relationship-building (→ 4). This includes a “friendly and caring relationship, [...] a well-attuned connection based on the authenticity and self-congruence of the counsellor” (ibid.: 66), which should also be adapted to the individual client and take their attachment behaviour into account.

When dealing with clients, the counsellor can create safety and strengthen connection and trust by considering the following points and, if necessary, specifically agreeing them with the client (for details see ibid.: 302f.):

1. Clarification of what can be safely talked about and what should not (yet) be talked about.
2. All statements are accepted, accusations of blame are summarised, and the process is allowed to proceed as slowly as necessary.
3. The counsellor is confident enough to bear hearing painful stories and feelings.
4. The counsellor empathises with the family history, reflects it and shows understanding for the associated feelings and conflicts.

Work on and with feelings is closely linked to the topic of attachment. For many people, it is not easy to talk about their feelings in concrete terms. Moreover, these feelings are often not articulated explicitly, but rather conveyed implicitly or manifested in specific behaviours. We laugh when we feel joy, cry when we are sad or blush when we are ashamed. This can also be used as an approach so that the counselling does not just consist of talking about feelings. They can be expressed

or described with the help of images, metaphors or objects (→ 6.3). Particularly when working with children, it is a good idea to discuss feelings by, for example, associating them with animals and their meaning for children, or using helpful materials such as the Familie Erdmann therapy card set (cf. Vogt/Bexte n.d.).



Affects, emotions and feelings

The terms “affects”, “emotions” and “feelings” are often used synonymously. However “affects” are the fundamental basis for emotions and feelings. They do not have to be learnt, but are part of the human behavioural repertoire from birth. Thus infants are already able to display typical facial expressions of interest, surprise, disgust, joy, anger, sadness and fear, as these affects have become established through evolution as essential survival behaviours (cf. Wagner/Russinger 2016: 75). Emotions, on the other hand, arise from external stimuli and are strongly characterised by individual experiences as well as culture-dependent values and norms. These include shame, guilt, pride and gratitude (cf. *ibid.*). Feelings, on the other hand, manifest themselves in bodily reactions – these are what we can consciously perceive and name. While affects in particular, but also emotions, tend to occur unconsciously, feelings can arise consciously, e.g. through thoughts. However, even if feelings can in principle be controlled, they are mostly automatic, like breathing or climbing stairs.

Although feelings are cross-cultural, the feelings learnt and the way in which they are expressed can sometimes differ considerably. This becomes clear, for example, in the context of shame (→ 7.9): while in some cultures it is considered impolite and a sign of shame or insecurity not to look the other person in the eye when talking to them, in other cultures direct eye contact is associated with attributes such as impoliteness, intrusiveness and unpleasantness (shame). In particular, feelings of shame relating to the body or sexuality can vary greatly depending on the culture.

The iceberg model

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper, pens

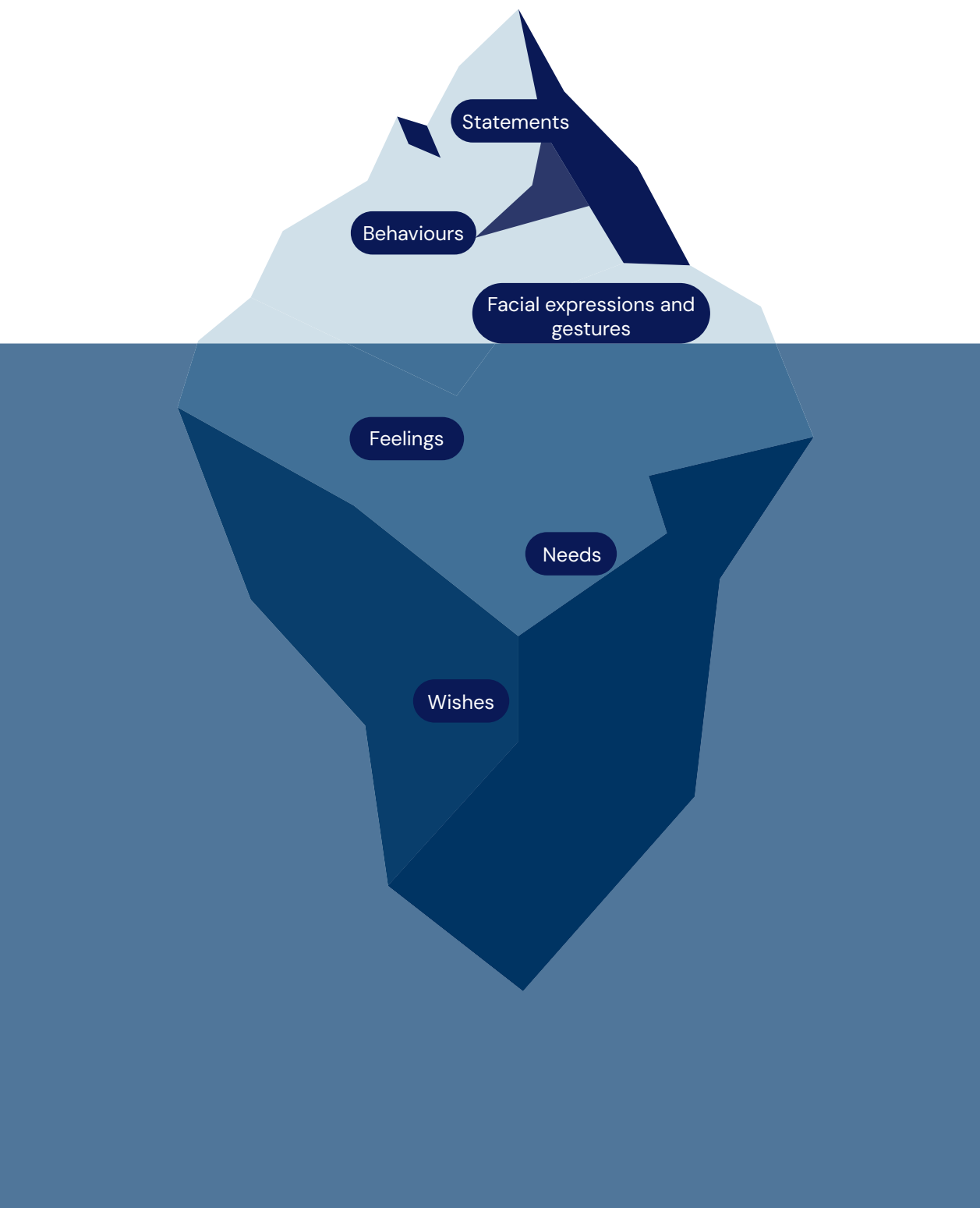
The “iceberg model” is based on a theory proposed by the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud and his assumptions about the conscious and subconscious mind. Freud developed the theory of the ego, superego and id. While the superego represents the learnt moral authority in the sense of normative ideas about what people should and should not think and do, the id stands for unconscious demands on the ego in the form of stimuli (drives). According to Freud, these are innate. Between these two entities stands the ego, which seeks to mediate and balance both demands. The ego represents what may be called the conscious and critical/rational mind.

The iceberg model takes up these assumptions about the human psyche (see Fig. 6). The expressed experiences and concrete behaviours in this model represent the visible part of the iceberg that protrudes from the water, which we consciously perceive and which others can also see. The majority of the iceberg, however – its base – is underwater. Feelings can be located in the conscious section, i.e. above the surface of the water, or in the subconscious section, i.e. below the surface of the water. While emotions are usually located below the surface of the water and, like feelings, are often clearer, albeit blurred, the affects lie dormant in the depths. They are not initially visible or tangible, but form the invisible base of the iceberg. The iceberg model, though admittedly based on Freudian theory, at the same time – depending on how counsellors ultimately classify it and present it to clients in simplified form (see Fig. 6 as an example) – avoids creating a hierarchy of the different levels. The focus is instead on the interactions between what is conscious and what is unconscious – but not on an evaluation of this through the model itself or even by the counsellor.

The image can be quickly drawn and explained during the counselling session. Together with the client, visible or conscious behaviour and statements by the client or other people (e.g. the allegedly radical child, or the parents) can then be picked up on and recorded. Underlying, seemingly invisible feelings or needs that are linked to the visible statements and behaviours and interact with them can then also be discussed, classified, reflected on and made visible as they are added to the image.

In principle, this exercise can be carried out with any client. Parents or professionals who have contact with the index person and also the index person themselves can, together with the counsellor, use the image to reflect on their own behaviour and/or the behaviour of people relevant to them. This model can be used, for example, to reveal that behind a stark rejection of previous hobbies and turning away from old friends is a desire for (drastic) change. A Salafist ideological conviction may also serve the desire to be something special or, due to the strict rules, make it possible to break away from old behaviours that are perceived as harmful (e.g. alcohol consumption or drug-taking). Covering up one's body can arise from a desire for protection and safety from or after sexual assault or hostility,

Fig. 6: The iceberg model - an example



judgement and stigmatisation. The iceberg model can support reflection on such diverse individual experiences and feelings.

Even in counselling sessions with relatives, the needs, wishes and feelings that (possibly) lie behind certain statements or behaviours are often not openly visible. For example, the statement "You only care about your religion!" may conceal a feeling of sadness because the parent misses being close to the child and would like to spend more time with them. There may also be a specific fear for the child, for their future or that contact may be broken off.

The image of the iceberg can also depict the individual's own needs, the unconscious demands they make on themselves and the background to their feelings and behaviours, and at the same time show how important it is to communicate and reflect on these. The task of the counsellor is to accompany and support clients in (better) recognising and classifying behaviours and feelings as a result of deeper understanding, and ultimately to work on and change them. The corresponding statements, behaviours and possible underlying needs and feelings can be discussed and noted during the counselling session. Reframing is particularly recommended as a method for this (→ 6.3), e.g.:

- "What statements do you keep hearing from your son/daughter?" / "What statements do you keep hearing from your parents?"
- "What behaviours and changes have you observed since your son/daughter joined this movement?" / "How do your parents react to your newly discovered religion?"
- "How would your son/daughter explain their own behaviour? What do you think is important to him/her?" / "How would your parents explain their behaviour? What do you think is important to them?" [Change of perspective]
- "Suppose your roles were reversed. You are now your son/daughter and you hear me as a parent saying: 'I'm not leaving the house with you like that!' What feelings does that trigger in you?" [Substitution, change of perspective]

The feelings star

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Short exercise 

Materials: Template (→ 12.2)

It can help both counsellors and clients to make the broad spectrum of feelings tangible by gaining an understanding of

the overarching affects or feelings and visualising their various gradations. On average, our daily vocabulary only contains around ten feelings, although in our language, significantly more emotional gradations are recognised. It can therefore be helpful to be aware of other terms that can be used to describe feelings (→ 6.2). This is the purpose of the “feelings star” – with its help, different feelings and their gradations can be named and depicted in graphic form. Within counselling, it serves as a tool to provide clients with guidance. Examples of accompanying questions are:

- “When we talk about this topic, what feelings arise for you? Can you locate them on the feelings star?”
- “What level do you rate this form of fear (between concern and panic) as?”

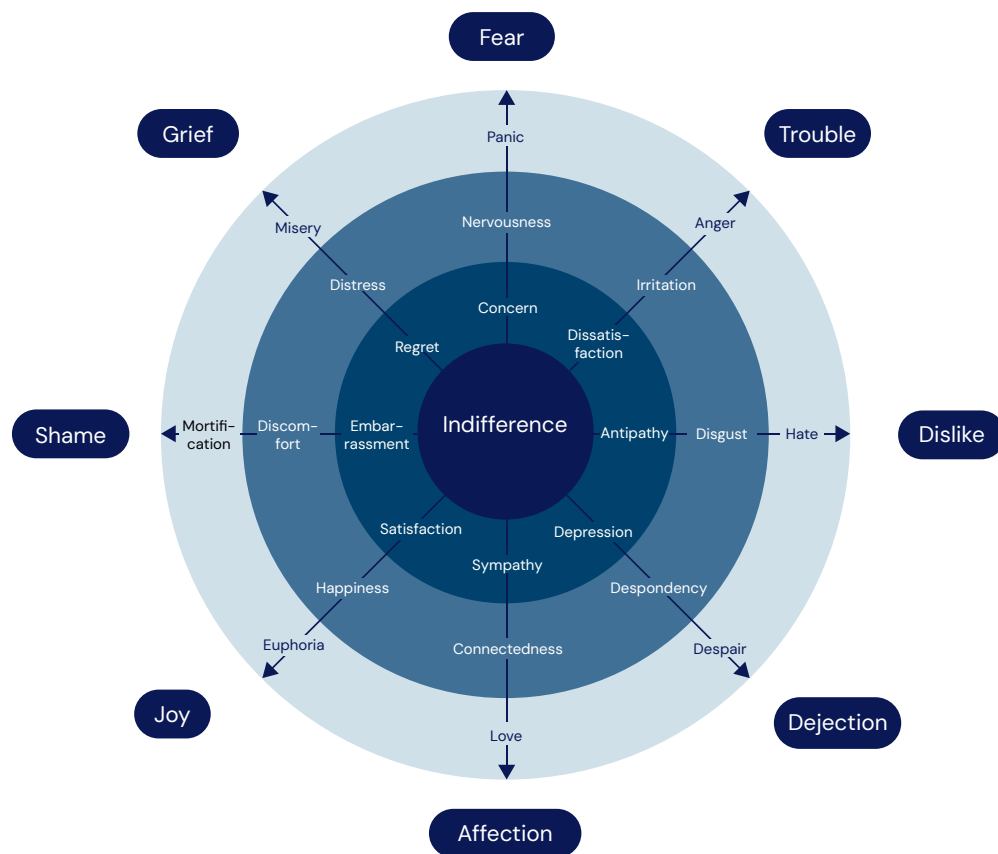


Fig. 7: The emotions star

Literature tip: Needs finder for therapy and counselling – Finding and naming needs – Understanding yourself, being understood, giving empathy (A4, laminated) by Future Pace Media

Mirroring and offering feelings

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals

Time frame: Short exercise

Materials: ---

“From an emotion-focussed perspective, every emotional change begins with perceiving the emotional experience: clients are encouraged to perceive their feelings precisely in the actual moment, express them in words and in the process develop their meaning” (Wagner/Russinger 2016: 199). The counsellor’s task is to accompany clients in this process by paying attention to those moments in which the client’s emotions emerge, and sharing these impressions with them carefully and empathetically (cf. ibid.). This is possible with the help of mirroring²⁴ (→ 6.3), which allows emotional experiences to be verbalised and made tangible.

²⁴ The mirroring options in the following example are based on Wagner/Russinger (2016: 199ff.), but have been adapted for the example presented.

	Example: Conversation with a client whose son travelled to the “Islamic State” (IS) and died:
Client:	Sometimes everything that has happened seems completely unreal to me. All I feel when I think of him is empty.
Counsellor:	After such an unbelievable event, I can well understand that you can’t believe it and sometimes perceive nothing ... [empathic mirroring]
Client:	Sometimes I can’t do anything, I feel paralysed, even though I also have to look after his brothers and sisters.
Counsellor:	You need time for yourself to process it mentally, but at the same time you think it’s important to look after the other children too ... [empathic reinforcement].
Client:	Sometimes I think I should have stopped him, I should have noticed the signs!
Counsellor:	In those moments you feel as if you’ve done something wrong or that you’re almost to blame for what’s happened ... You think that if you could have prevented it somehow, then maybe it wouldn’t have happened – there’s a hope there ... [exploratory mirroring].

Client:	And my mother says she needs time for herself now and can't help me much with the children.
Counsellor:	(playing the mother) "I can't help you now! Now that you're in distress and feel weighed down, I can't support you ..." I can imagine that this triggers a lot in you ... [evocative mirroring].

In other similar situations, however, it can also happen that clients lose themselves in telling the story without picking up on the feelings involved, and sometimes their reporting seems emotionless. This form of avoidance can be a coping strategy; counsellors should be aware of this and only approach the feelings cautiously, for example by carefully asking about the feelings or making empathic assumptions (cf. Wagner/Russinger 2016: 201f.).

Example:



Client:	(seemingly matter-of-fact, without emotion) Oh, my daughter has always had phases like that. First it was the drugs, then she just locked herself in her room for weeks on end. And now it's this fixation on religion. We've seen it all before. She has been through so much – she was raped at the age of 11. We assume that this phase will also pass. She's already had a number of problems, for example with ...
Counsellor:	(interrupts the flow of speech) As you're saying this, I'm wondering how you feel about it ... I can imagine that these phases must have been stressful, that you were often worried.

It is often helpful to offer feelings openly instead of asking about them, because a question like "How do you feel about that?" is usually followed by the client reflecting or brooding. If this is not helpful for the conversation, counsellors can often tell from the answer "I don't know ...". Hypotheses such as "This frightens you", on the other hand, have the advantage that they are processed in a different region of the brain, because such statements are immediately checked in the limbic system. They may then be directly rejected (and corrected) or the client may agree with them ("Yes, exactly!" or "No, not frightened, more worried that ..."). By using this form of empathic communication, the counsellor can also strengthen the connection with the client. The client is then more likely to feel understood, recognised and supported in their feelings, and find it easier to examine and reflect on themselves and their feelings.



Mentalising feelings together

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals

Time frame: Short exercise

Materials: ---

"Mentalising" is the term given to the ability to interpret one's own behaviour and that of other people by attributing mental states [...], i.e. to imagine oneself from the outside and to imagine others from the inside" (von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 302; cf. also Fonagy et al. 2002). This ability has an impact on yourself and how you interact with other people, as empathy is reflected and trained with the help of conscious mentalisation. Systemic counselling uses mentalising in particular in circular questions (→ 6.3), especially with regard to feelings. Those who can realistically assess and classify themselves and put themselves in the shoes of others will find it easier to react empathetically and develop understanding for other people and their behaviour. Such a focus can therefore be decisive in resolving family conflicts. (Circular) questions that encourage a change of perspective and ask specifically about the (presumed) feelings can also help to bring people closer together and build mutual understanding (→ 6.3). For example:

- "How do you think your son feels when you confront him with what you think about his beliefs?"
- "How do you think your father feels when you confront him with what you now think about his lifestyle?"

Counsellors themselves can also use mentalising by revealing their inner processes and feelings (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 303), e.g. through formulations such as:

- "I'm just thinking about ..."
- "I have a good feeling about what you said, because ..."
- "When you say it like that, I get mixed feelings – on the one hand ..., on the other ... Does that sound familiar?"

In order to mentalise feelings and inner states together with the client, the counsellor can use different conversation techniques (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 303f.):

Method	Example
Interruption	Sorry to interrupt you but when you were describing how your son had changed, I wondered how you felt about it?
Exploring	How did you feel when you were telling me about this change?
Rewinding	You said a little while ago ... / You said in our last meeting ...
Reflecting	What happened to you and the others afterwards? How did you feel after that situation?
Pinpointing	I notice that whenever you talk about your son, you look very anxiously at your husband – but you don't look at your wife. Has either of you noticed this?
Checking	Do you have this feeling too? / ... or am I imagining it?
Slowing down	What do you think your wife is feeling when she looks at you with such concern? What do you think your husband feels when you look over at him like that? How do you think your son would feel if he were present and saw his mother looking worriedly at his father?
Generalising	We've heard now that your wife turns to you for help when she is worried about your son, but you reject this appeal. Perhaps this is only the case in this instance, but perhaps not. Can you talk about whether a similar situation arises at home or on other occasions?
Reviewing	When you recap what happened here today, can you talk about what it meant to you? Can you draw any conclusions from this? What feelings do you take away with you?

Working with poetry: the elevenie

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Short exercise , also possible as "homework" 

Materials: Pen, paper

Creative writing offers different ways of dealing with feelings. Tales, poetry and rhymed prose also have a centuries-old tradition in Muslim cultures and countries in the Middle East: "The rhyme was an aid to memory and set the narrative apart from everyday life and everyday conversations" (Hourani 2014: 254). However, the extent to which working with poetry appeals to clients is less dependent on culture, and more on the individual. For creative clients, it can be a good idea to deal creatively with feelings in the form of art and poetry. There are a number of different ways to do this, such as the hero's journey (cf. Dießner 2008) or various forms of poetry.

The "elevenie" is a simple form of poetry that counsellors can offer to clients to describe and reflect on their feelings. This technique can be done in a quiet moment at home. The poem can be recited and honoured or kept secret – depending on what feels right to the client. It is arranged in five consecutive lines and contains eleven words, each of which is supposed to deal with a specific concept:

First line: A topic/theme, object, thought, feeling, smell or similar. (1 word)

Second line: Description of the word from line 1: What does it (not) do? (2 words)

Third line: How or where is the word from line 1? (3 words)

Fourth line: What do I think about the word in line 1? (4 words)

Fifth line: Conclusion: what is the result? (1 word)

Examples:

Fear [emotion]

Blocks me

Everywhere in body

Offering warning and help

Alarm

Change [wish]

Wonderful, new

Generates excited curiosity

I must orientate myself

Motivation

Culture and rituals

Target groups: Index clients, relatives



Time frame: Ritual-dependent; session exercise
or as "homework" 

Materials: ---

In different counselling constellations, it can be useful to draw on rituals. This is because they have the function of providing order and structure, and so offer many people, especially children, security as they grow up and in their everyday lives. Rituals also serve to facilitate significant transitions. Across cultures, they therefore play an important role, for example in marking ageing (birthday celebrations), marriage (wedding celebrations) and the before, during and after stages of the birth of a child, and also in cases of loss and bidding farewell (e.g. funerals). With their repetitiveness, active behaviour, specific timing, defined sequence, inherent meaning, manifestation using certain objects (e.g. special clothing, candles) and their commonality of experience, rituals combine several different components that can provide safety and security (cf. von Schlippe/El Hachimi/Jürgens 2013: 139).

When working with clients, it can therefore be useful to use rituals to accompany change processes. If clients want to say

goodbye to behaviours or feelings, for example, a ritual can be used to make this process binding and familiar. Counsellors can themselves provide suggestions for rituals (e.g. writing a letter, burying something). However, as the clients may have different languages and different migration histories within the family, it can be more effective to ask about specific rituals (with positive connotations) from their own upbringing or within their family. It is advisable to find out in advance what a ritual is called and how it is described in the client's first or second language. Ideally, clients will be able to think of a ritual of their own with positive connotations that can be used in the relevant situation. The following are examples of questions which can be used to discuss and elaborate on rituals:

- *"What do rituals mean to you? How would you describe a ritual in your first language?"*
- *"What (special) rituals can you think of that you remember from your childhood or from your family? Which of these do you associate with positive memories and feelings?"*
- *"What happened if you didn't like a ritual or didn't want to take part?"*
- *"What meaning, what significance did these rituals have for you, and what meaning do they have now?"*
- *"Which rituals do you no longer take part in? Which rituals have you kept?"*
- *"Which rituals might have changed and which ones might have developed anew?"*

Promoting Resilience and Strengthening Self-Esteem

Counsellors often encounter clients who have been or are exposed to extraordinary stresses in their lives, and who sometimes support radical or extremist ideas and join the associated movements for this very reason. In such cases, radicalisation can also be seen as an attempt to cope with a crisis and, in the most extreme cases, it becomes a survival strategy. Such extraordinary stresses can include very different factors, such as growing up in poverty, the loss of a close relative, experiences of racism and discrimination, separation and divorce of parents, mental illness of one or both parents or experiences of violence, war and displacement.



Resilience

Resilience research looks for protective factors that make it possible to strengthen resistance (resilience) to psychological, biological and psychosocial developmental risks (cf. Wustmann 2005: 192). “Resilience” therefore describes the ability to be better prepared for emergency situations, to cope better with them in an acute stress or crisis situation and to process them better afterwards (cf. Grotberg 2011: 54; Wustmann 2005: 192f.). In short, resilient people cope better with emergency situations than would be expected (→ 4.8).

Often, the risk factors in the client’s life cannot simply be eliminated as they have become an unalterable part of their history. However, it is possible to change how the stresses are dealt with. Resilience can be learnt, because it “refers to a dynamic, transactional process between the child [or person ...] and [their] environment” (Wustmann 2005: 193). Furthermore, resilience depends on the situation: in circumstances that have already been successfully overcome, people are more resilient afterwards (cf. Henninger 2016: 160). This is another

reason why it is useful to explicitly recall such situations in the counselling setting:

- *“Have you ever had worries about your son? How did you deal with them at the time? Who or what helped you? And how did the situation then develop?”*
- *“Did you have arguments with your parents in the past? What was it like then, exactly? What was different? Who or what helped you to find common ground, even if you had different opinions?”*

Various scientific studies have investigated which specific protective factors particularly promote resilience. In addition to internal protective factors (e.g. attitude, mindset, beliefs, convictions, coping strategies), external protective factors in a person’s environment can also make a key contribution to promoting resilience (e.g. positive role models, friendships, helpful people in the environment) (cf. Wustmann 2005: 196; Werner/Smith 2001).



Religion as a resource and protective factor

Spirituality and religion are often particularly important in prevention and intervention work in the area of religiously motivated extremism (→ 7.7). This importance can manifest in very different ways. In some cases, an ostensible attraction to and interest in religion, in the form of radical views, can quickly dissipate when underlying needs are addressed during counselling. In this scenario, a rigorously religious or ideological concept may be acting as a model, and its apparent usefulness is cancelled out if the needs can be satisfied in an alternative way. In other cases, however, there is a serious religious interest on the part of the client – but they have only learnt about the arguments in the context of an Islamist or Salafist interpretation. It can be helpful to consciously utilise religion as a resource here. With the help of theological discussions, or critical discussions with positive connotations, the protective factors which religion brings can be made central and accessible to the client, including as an impetus for exiting radical or extremist thinking and behaviour. Whether religion or spirituality can act as a protective factor ultimately depends on many influences, as well as on whether the belief in a meaning provided by God is associated with personal responsibility and active coping strategies (for details see Mauritz 2018).

Although it can be extremely helpful in some case constellations to work with clients with theological expertise or a broad knowledge of Islam, this is not necessarily required as long as the work is carried out with sensitivity to religious issues. It is more important to approach clients with an open mind and with curiosity – especially when it comes to religious resources (→ 4.12). This can help the clients themselves to focus on the affirming aspects of religion and to engage both critically and positively with their own understanding. Counsellors can sensitively interpose remarks which show appreciation into the conversation, if they notice such affirming aspects, and thus reflect and encourage a resource-oriented view. It would therefore be conceivable to give as feedback:

“You often tell me about the things you can’t do in life. Sometimes I have the feeling you might not even realise all the things that you do manage to do. For example, I noticed that you managed to fast for the entire month. That certainly wasn’t easy – after all, it was very warm this year. I was impressed by how you managed to do that. What helped you to stick to it?”

Developing a resource-oriented view of possible protective factors that clients can draw on is potentially helpful for successful development. It is also possible for the counsellor to consciously promote the client’s resilience with targeted exercises – primarily to help strengthen their self-esteem, an inner protective factor.

Together with the *self-concept* (the image that a person has of themselves) and the expectation of *self-efficacy*, it shapes the self (for details see Thomsen et al. 2018). The term feeling of self-esteem is often used synonymously, even though it is actually more narrowly defined, with it being focussed on a feeling or emotion. Self-esteem or self-evaluation can have both positive and negative characteristics and is shaped not only by individual genetic predisposition, but also to a large extent by environmental factors, especially interactions with others. Virginia Satir (2010: 42) explains self-esteem:

“Integrity, honesty, responsibility, compassion, love and competence – all flow easily from people whose self-esteem is high. We feel that we matter, that the world is a better place because we are alive. We have faith in our own competence. We are able to ask others for help, yet we believe we can make our own decisions and are, in the end, our own best resources. Appreciating our own worth, we are ready to see and respect the worth of others.”

People who subscribe to an ideology or movement espousing group-focussed enmity generally devalue certain people on the basis of (supposed) group membership. Counsellors often encounter (index) clients who have internalised such devaluation mechanisms and may also express them openly (→ 7.6). In this

context, it can be helpful to incorporate the effectiveness of self-esteem into the work, so that this is specifically strengthened.

Although self-esteem is closely linked to individual abilities, it should not be equated with self-confidence. The latter relates to what a person can do, whereas self-worth is more than this. It represents the individual assessment of these abilities and thus refers to the appreciation of a person for their own sake:

“It is important for parents to differentiate between the sense of self and self-confidence in children, because self-confidence relates to what a child can do. Confidence in one’s own abilities is good and important, but it is much more important and fundamental to strengthen a child’s sense of self. A child with a well-developed sense of self is at peace with themselves, feels comfortable in their own skin, knows that they are good just the way they are, regardless of their performance and abilities” (Stangl 2022).

Self-confidence is an important part of self-esteem and is also beneficial for resilience. For people with low, unstable or fragile self-esteem, this can be a motivating factor for seeking recognition and social acceptance in a radical or extremist community. The increase in a client’s self-esteem through religion as a resource can be recognised from statements such as:

- *“The only thing that mattered to my father was that I did well at school. He never really accepted me, because I wasn’t good enough. But the brothers don’t care.”*
- *“The sisters accept me for who I am. They don’t care what I look like.”*
- *“I was always ostracised at school and didn’t have any real friends. Since I became a Muslim, all true Muslims are my friends.”*

If it becomes clear in the course of the counselling process that strengthening the self-esteem of the index client is a key goal of individual development, and may counteract radicalisation or support deradicalisation, it is usually helpful to focus on this topic within the counselling. In addition, the level of self-esteem of an individual can influence how successfully and securely they are integrated into different areas of life (systems). Higher self-esteem has a strong impact on achieving a fulfilling relationship and job satisfaction (cf. Orth et al. 2012), and also on maintaining physical health (cf. Stangl 2022; Thomsen et al. 2018: 92). All these factors in turn strengthen resilience. Strengthening self-esteem is therefore a helpful tool in both prevention and intervention, so as to achieve direct and indirect effects on different levels.

In order to strengthen self-esteem, individual aspects that make up self-esteem can be specifically reflected upon and developed. These include not only positive self-care (e.g. through mindfulness exercises) and strengthening self-confidence (e.g. by practising self-control and self-management) (cf. Potreck-Rose/Jacob 2021), but also accepting one's own weaknesses and focussing on one's own strengths (e.g. through imagination exercises or resource-activating exercises) (cf. Stahl 2020; Reddemann 2016).

Imagination and mindfulness exercises

People tend to constantly evaluate everything in their environment, including themselves and other people. Furthermore, they often focus less on the here and now and more on the past or possible future scenarios. It is not uncommon for a client's counselling sessions to quickly revolve almost entirely around conflicts that appear to be related to radicalisation. These conflicts put index clients under physical and psychological stress, and make them feel insecure: *Am I (still) accepted for my own sake?* This can block parents from recognising and acknowledging positive things. Training oneself in mindfulness means consciously focussing on the here and now and consciously refraining from judgements. Attention is focussed on one's own body, the feelings and reactions experienced are accepted without judgement, the resulting knowledge and experience can be transferred to other situations and people, and it is possible to gain an understanding of the dynamic changes in one's feelings and reactions (cf. Kuschel 2016: 14f.).



Mindfulness and prayer

Many mindfulness theories originate from theological and philosophical traditions of thought. If the client practises a form of prayer, it may be a good idea to address and include the topic of mindfulness in this context. Prayer also focusses on concentrating on the here and now and the connection to God, and can have a stress-relieving effect similar to meditation.

Mindfulness is trained through various physical exercises that focus on calm and conscious breathing, and this positive focus and concentration on oneself increases self-esteem and well-being. Such exercises may also be suitable for counsellors themselves, e.g. in preparation for or as a follow-up to a counselling session (→ 5). It is crucial that the person's own powers of imagination are used in this, because the thoughts will also determine the feelings. If you think about something beautiful, you will also feel it physically. Mindfulness can be

trained in four areas: body perception, perception of feelings, perception of thoughts and perception of thought patterns (cf. Wagner/Russinger 2016: 229f.).

One advantage of the following exercises is that they are fun to do, and the client can also repeat them on their own outside of the counselling session. Due to the therapeutic connotations of the setting and character of the imagination and mindfulness exercises, however, it is also possible that they will be rejected by clients with a critical or sceptical attitude towards (psycho) therapeutic approaches, or who have had negative experiences with them. They should therefore be presented as an invitation or idea that the client may decline if they wish.

Positive review

Target groups: Index clients, relatives

Time frame: Short exercise

Materials: ---

The "positive review" mindfulness exercise sharpens the individual's focus on their own resources and positive moments in everyday life, which otherwise often remain hidden. Counsellors can give this exercise to clients as a recommendation or integrate it into counselling sessions. In this case, it is a good idea to briefly integrate the exercise on a regular basis, for example in the last five minutes of each session.

For this exercise, the counsellor recommends that the client thinks (e.g. every evening) about three things that went well that day, that they were happy about or that they were grateful for. These can be experiences or material things, but also feelings. It is important that these are wholly positive things and that they give the client encouragement. The exercise can be written down every evening in a gratitude diary as a ritual, or simply done in the person's head (e.g. when brushing their teeth or before going to sleep). For clients who are unable to devote five minutes to this every day, another option is to look back on the past week on a specific day. If the positive ideas are written down, the person can visualise them whenever it seems helpful.



Resource team

Target groups: Index clients (children)

Time frame: Session exercise

Materials: Moderation cards, pens

Children are particularly good at visualising resources through play. The “resource team”²⁵ is an exercise based on the “inner team” (→ 7.11) and is good for working with children in different situations and with different challenges.

Any skills that the child or client has or would like to have are written down on moderation cards. The counsellor explains that the aim is to put together a personal sports team or crew. Depending on the number of skills noted down, they can form a football team, volleyball team, handball team or similar. There then follows a discussion about which particular challenge needs to be overcome at the moment. The counsellor and client think together about which coping skills could be used.

Example:

M. recently came to Germany from Syria with his mother. His mother was imprisoned and he now lives with his grandparents. M. misses his mother. **Challenge:** M. wants to be able to cope better with missing his mother and not be sad so often.

Examples of skills noted down:

I can ... / I am ...

1. ... make friends quickly [M. has already made friends at school and makes arrangements to play with them. That is a distraction for him].
2. ... visit my mother [M. is looking forward to seeing his mother and telling her about the things he does each day].
3. ... build Lego [M. says that he likes building Lego and enjoys it; when he does it, he sometimes forgets his sadness].
4. ... write letters [M. can write letters to his mother and tell her about his day, and so feel closer to her].
5. ... brave [M. describes himself as brave; this helps him to cope better with the sadness].
6. ...

After the exercise, the cards with the team on them can be taken away and used again for any future challenges. With the help of the team, it is symbolically illustrated that there is a whole range of resources available for the child to draw on, that different resources are helpful for different challenges and that the other resources are “waiting on the benches”. Resources that are currently less helpful should be kept in reserve, because

²⁵ The exercise is based on the “Resource team” exercise (cf. Caby/Caby 2017a: 75f.).

the “opposing team” might change and then new strategies and skills may be required.

Safe place

Target groups: Index clients, relatives



Time frame: Short exercise ⌚

Materials: ---

For clients who are particularly insecure or under a lot of stress or who find it difficult to calm down, e.g. because family disputes take up a great deal of space, it can be helpful for them to use their own imagination to find peace. The exercise can also be very helpful for clients suffering from trauma (→ 7.10). In a short exercise, counsellors encourage clients to imagine a personal safe haven – for religious clients this might be a mosque, for others a quiet island. The choice is entirely up to the client. For the exercise, it is important to speak calmly and slowly, and to deliberately incorporate pauses to give the client space and time to think and feel their way into the exercise. The following text is one option:

“If you wish, please close your eyes and make yourself comfortable in a position that is relaxing for you. If you prefer to keep your eyes open, that’s okay too. Make yourself comfortable in a position in which you feel at ease. Concentrate on your breathing and try to breathe slowly and deeply. Think freely about where you could find a place that offers protection, security and peace. Visualise this place exactly, first from a distance, and then approach it slowly. Do you hear anything? What do you see? Do you smell anything? Can you feel something on your skin, perhaps warmth or wind? This is your place. You can bring in people you would like to have here, or send them all away if you prefer to be alone. Breathe slowly and calmly and bring forth the feeling of this safe place. If you have a picture of this place, you can bring it out at any time and return to it.”²⁶

This exercise is also very useful when working with children or young people. With open guidance, children and young people can also seek out a safe place, an inner world or a favourite place in their imagination, and augment it and use it as a place of retreat (for details see Hanswille/Kissenbeck 2014: 328f.).

²⁶ Based on Pfalz-Klinikum (n.d.)

Consciously confronting uncertainty

Target groups: Index clients, relatives


Time frame: Short exercise 

Materials: ---

Damaged, low or unstable self-esteem often goes hand in hand with insecurities and fears. It can be valuable for clients to consciously confront this uncertainty and these feelings of fear and deal with them. In the exercise “Facing my insecurity”, the counsellor accompanies the client and guides them to focus their own perception on this very insecurity, consciously face it, accept it and recontextualise it. Again, the counsellor should deliberately speak slowly and calmly, and take several pauses to give the client time to engage with the exercise and the individual sections and ideas, and to open up their imagination and experience it. Counsellors should bear in mind that crucial processes may take place in the other person, which will be supported by pauses. The following text example can serve as a basis here:

“If you wish, close your eyes and focus your awareness on the centre of your body. If you prefer to keep your eyes open, that’s okay too. Make yourself comfortable in a position in which you feel at ease. Be aware of your breathing – without trying to correct it. Notice how deep your breath goes. Is it catching somewhere? In the next step, try to feel your insecurity. You can think of a specific situation in which you feel insecure. How does your body feel? Is there a tingling sensation in your stomach? Is your heart pounding or is everything tightening up? Stay in this situation and in this feeling for a moment, and then say to yourself: ‘Yes, that’s right. That’s part of me.’ You can now give the uncertainty a shape by thinking about what it might look like. Would you also like to give it a name? It’s this uncertainty that causes you anxiety, which you can feel. You can welcome it and accept it. It belongs to you and wants to protect you. But it can also cause you to make a false self-assessment (e.g. ‘I’m not good enough’, ‘I can’t do anything’, ‘I’m not worth anything’). If this uncertainty has a shape and a name, you can enter into a dialogue with it and find new ways to appreciate yourself more.”²⁷

Self-control and self-management

Self-control (or self-regulation) means being able to consciously and unconsciously control one’s own behaviour. This is also relevant in counselling, which explores changes that clients

²⁷ The exercise is based on Stahl (2020: 102), but has been adapted and expanded.

may find difficult. When communication and behaviour patterns have become established over a long period of time, the system supported initially tends to be fairly stable. Parents who want to develop less control and more trust, for example, may find it difficult to break out of the pattern of control and establish new behaviour and communication patterns. Such processes take time and can sometimes also require targeted support. Special exercises can be used to specifically promote and develop the individual’s self-confidence in their own competences, as well as self-control and management. Mobilising resources can also strengthen self-esteem: “Clients often comment, when the skills profile is drawn up, that it does them good to see their professional and social skills set out. Furthermore, they are often surprised by the wealth of their own competences, which then leads me to conclude that their self-esteem is (temporarily) quite low” (Lieser 2014: 39).

Oasis of well-being

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals 

Time frame: Short exercise 

Materials: A comfortable/special seating option

The “Oasis of well-being” exercise is about consciously strengthening individuals’ self-esteem and self-confidence. On the smaller scale of a two-person setting (counsellor and client), the counsellor can announce the exercise by saying that they would like to try something out, provided the client agrees. The exercise can be introduced as follows, for example:

“I have the feeling that you often had a hard time with everything that happened to you. I’ve been impressed many times by the way you’ve handled it. Would you like to do a little exercise where I put you in an oasis of well-being? I’d like to tell you everything that I think is great and impressive about you.”

The exercise is also particularly suitable for a family setting in which several family members take part in the counselling. In conflict situations, people often tend to confront each other with what they don’t like about or condemn in the other person. In the oasis of well-being scenario, on the other hand, family members’ self-esteem and self-confidence and family cohesion are strengthened by consciously focussing on individuals’ positive perceptions of each other. One family member or, alternatively, all attendees are accompanied one after the other into an imaginary oasis of well-being. This might be a special place, e.g. a particularly comfortable armchair or a seat cushion,

on which the person who is transferred to the oasis of well-being sits. The family members can decide who deserves this oasis of well-being (first). In this case, a possible introduction might be:

"I'd like to try an experiment with you called an oasis of well-being. I think you are all doing quite a lot of work at the moment by facing up to these conflicts. You deserve to hear what you appreciate about each other. Would you like to try it out? Which of you do you think could really do with being immersed in an oasis of well-being?"

It is important to explain to the other family members that only honest, positive, appreciative compliments may be given and that they must refrain from criticism. Minor and major things can be mentioned. If clients feel unsure, it can help to give examples of ways they could start sentences:

- What I like about you is that you ...
- I think it's great how you ...
- I think you're really good at ...

The exercise can be brought to a close with or without reflection. Clients often tend to enter into the subsequent assessment themselves. Counsellors can support this by encouraging clients to talk afterwards about the feelings that the exercise has triggered in them. This gives clients the opportunity to deal with their feelings in a positive way, to talk about them and to internalise the compliments they have received.

Examples:

- *"How did it feel for you to be in the oasis of well-being?"*
- *"What was it like saying so many positive things to your mother? How did that feel?"*
- *"What was it like for you to hear your father say what he appreciates about you?"*

Resource salad

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Moderation cards, pens

In the context of (potential) radicalisation, disputes often arise within families. In such tense systems, appreciation for one another is often lost. The "Resource salad" exercise²⁸ is a complementary method to the oasis of well-being. It is particularly suitable for individuals or families who complain, accuse and criticise a great deal.

The focus of the exercise is on strengthening the clients' self-confidence. For this exercise, moderation cards and pens are distributed to those attending, on which they then write down their own special skills. The cards are placed face down on the table or floor and shuffled well. Each person is then allowed to draw a card. One after the other, they can show the cards or the resources on the card and explain what they understand by them. They identify the named resource in themselves or find examples of situations in which the resource has been or might be particularly helpful. The next step is to speculate about who the resource might match and who might have written it down. The focus on existing/desirable resources and the change of perspective the exercise is intended to bring about help to support the self-confidence of all those involved and create a framework for positive communication within the family. However, caution is advised in families where there are strong factions or a split has developed, as the exercise may exacerbate this imbalance.

Resources ABC

Target groups: Index clients 

Time frame: As "homework" 

Materials: Template (→ 12.3) or paper, pens

Resources can include a wide range of different skills, characteristics, attitudes, feelings, experiences, memories, people, places, wishes, goals and even moments in time. They are "a range of supportive or protective tools or competences that enable people to influence situations and reduce unpleasant influences" (AG Sozialisationsbedingungen 2020: 28). Most people do not realise how many resources they actually have at their disposal. The "Resources ABC" helps the individual to reflect on their own resources, become aware of them and bring them to mind whenever necessary.

With the help of a template or on a sheet of paper with pens, the client is encouraged to write down at least three of their own resources for each letter of the alphabet. In order to be able to do the exercise without any time pressures and with enough space for reflection, it may be a good idea to give it to the client as "homework". It is important to emphasise to the client that the list is customisable and that fields can also be left blank if they cannot think of an entry for a particular letter. It

should also be stressed that the client should ultimately decide on the form their personal list should take. It is also important to emphasise that resources should always be positive, i.e. only positive and helpful thoughts should be noted down. This may be unfamiliar to clients who tend to have destructive thoughts and is another reason why it is important to take time for the exercise.

For clients whose first language is not German, it may also be a good idea for them to use the alphabet of their own native language, and to write down the terms in their respective language or use several languages. Counsellors can offer flexible options here to motivate clients and respond to individual needs and situations.

Another approach is to adapt the exercise to explicitly deal with individual focal points, such as faith. For example, a “Faith ABC” (→ 12.3) could be used to reflect on and note down all the resources that the client explicitly draws on from their faith.

Example:



A: Answers, acknowledgement, assistance ...

B: Belief, brothers, backup ...

C: ...

The Resources ABC or Faith ABC can be discussed openly during counselling, but it does not need to be. It is also possible to agree with the client that the list remains personal and private. However, if an individual wishes to discuss their own resources, it can also strengthen their confidence in them. New perspectives and options may also emerge.

Examples:



- “What resources occurred to you immediately?”
- “Which resources were you maybe not aware of before doing the exercise?”
- “Which resources could help you to get closer to your personal goal?”

Once the exercise has been successfully completed, clients can keep the list, and either store it in a suitable place if necessary or carry it with them, and take it out when needed to bring to mind their own resources, or always carry it with them and take it out when needed, e.g. in uncertain situations, to bring to mind their own resources and draw strength or security from them

(→ 6.3). The client may also choose to continue and expand the list. The longer the exercise continues to play a part, the more effective its potential to boost self-esteem.

Promoting resilience in work with children

In some counselling scenarios, counsellors may work directly or indirectly with younger adolescents or children, or they may be present in the counselling session, or become a central topic. Children are often also exposed or have been exposed in the past to particular stresses, because, for example, they have parents who argue or are separated, their parents are returnees or refugees, they may have experienced war and displacement, their parents or parents may have been imprisoned or they are growing up in a family context characterised by Islamism or Salafism (for details see Becker et al. 2020). Exercises that promote resilience can be helpful both in an individual setting and in a group setting (e.g. in a school context). The Liberi specialist unit, which from 2019 to 2021 worked intensively with children growing up in families influenced by Salafism, has published an information and exercise booklet on this subject. The booklet, *Gestärkt durchs Leben – Übungen zur Resilienzförderung in der Grundschule im Themenfeld Aufwachsen in islamistisch geprägten Familien* [Strength for life – Exercises for promoting resilience at primary school level on the theme of growing up in an Islamist family] is available free of charge. Two of the exercises developed there, which can be used in working with children or adolescents, are the “Resource book” (Becker et al. 2021: 56ff.) and “My different needs” (ibid.: 71f.), which are presented here in a slightly modified form. In addition, the exercises “Drawing a cartoon” (below) (cf. Caby/Caby 2017a: 120ff.) and “Resource team” (described above) (cf. Caby/Caby 2017b: 75ff.) are also particularly suitable for working with children.

Resource book

Target groups: Index clients (children) 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Book template for crafting/folding (e.g. in coloured paper), pens (symbol)

Edith H. Grotberg (2011: 55), who researched resilience across different countries and cultures, cites three sources of resilience: I have, I am, I can. All three forms of resilience relate to essential core elements of self-esteem and encompass resources at different levels, namely resources from the environment, from the individual’s identity and from their individual abilities. The exercise can be developed with children themselves, or with

parents and children together. In the exercise, a small folding book is first made (for detailed instructions, see Becker et al. 2021: 57). Each of the three double pages is given one of the following headings: “I HAVE”, “I AM”, “I CAN”. The children can then design their own individual book by writing, drawing or painting their own personal resources.

Examples:

I HAVE: *Friends, a lovely, loving home, fun playing football ...*

I AM: *Proud of myself, lovable, funny ...*

I CAN: *Read, draw well, run fast, speak several languages ...*

The exercise makes the children aware of the different resources available to them, and reinforces them. These can relate to their environment, their personalities and also their skills, and thus cover a broad repertoire of available resources. Often, the children themselves only realise how strong they are and how much support they can rely on in their personal environment when they reflect on this. The resource book can be kept in a special place and taken out and added to as required, e.g. when challenging situations arise at school or there are disputes at school or in the family.

Drawing a cartoon

Target groups: Index clients (children) 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper, pens

Knowing how to deal with problems – or rather, challenging situations – and how to find solutions is a key competence in terms of resilience. Based on Caby/Caby (2017a: 120ff.), this exercise can be particularly useful when working with children to explore the challenges and solutions in a play-based or creative way.

But caution: this exercise may be unsuitable for children from Salafist-influenced homes, as their religious beliefs may not permit them to draw pictures of people. If this is the case, the children should not be confronted with a drawing-based exercise, as this might exacerbate their fears, insecurities, ambivalence or conflicted loyalties.

The following is an example of the steps which can be used for the exercise:

1. First ask the child to draw six squares of the same size on a blank page, as they would typically appear in a cartoon. In this way, the child creates the entire cartoon independently right from the start. The child is asked to write down their “problem” or current challenge in the first square at the top left. As a rule, these perceptions of problems are linked to specific feelings such as fear, shame or anger. It is therefore a good idea to ask the child specifically about their feelings so that they can express them in the picture.
2. In the next square (to the right of the first), the child draws their personal helper figure. This can be a (hero) character from a book or a film, a person from the child’s environment or a completely imaginary character. It is important that the character has skills that can help the child to cope with the challenge.
3. In the third square, the child draws how they and the helper figure think about what gift they could give to the problem.
4. In the next picture, the gift is given.
5. In the following picture, the challenge is drawn again as it looks after it has received the gift.
6. In the last picture, the child draws themselves and the helper figure in another situation in which the challenge might perhaps arise again.

The cartoon should be explicitly appreciated again after the exercise. Parents can and should also be involved, if possible. This shared appreciation strengthens the child’s self-esteem and may help them to better cope with future challenges.

My different needs

Target groups: Index clients (children) 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper, pens

Conflicts often arise because the people involved have different needs, but do not openly talk about them. If parents use ostensibly religious rules to back up their arguments, for example, it may be that social motives are also playing a part. In such cases, it is then often helpful to focus less on the religious idea or on questioning it in a confrontational manner, but instead

to look first for common ground and compromise solutions in relation to the social motives, for the benefit of the child.

Example:



Father: You're not allowed to go on the school trip. That is forbidden for us.

Daughter: Everything is always forbidden, that's just mean!

Talking about the underlying needs can potentially make it easier to find a compromise (→ 6.2). Because if the actual concerns and needs of the people involved are communicated, it is often possible to find a compromise, even in apparently deadlocked conflict situations. Counsellors can help individuals to develop this form of communication by asking about specific wishes and needs.

Example:



Counsellor: Your daughter is very important to you. If you say that your daughter is not allowed to go on the school trip, you probably have your reasons. Can you describe what specific concerns you have about the school trip?

Father: I'm worried that you will get into situations on the school trip where you will do things that are not in line with our religion. I want you to be safe and not sleep in a room with boys.

Counsellor: You are angry and upset when your father says that you're not allowed to go. You probably have your reasons for this too. Would you like to explain why it is so important for you to go on the school trip?

Daughter: It's important to me to go on the school trip because all my friends are going and I don't want to be left out. And in any case, the girls only sleep in a room with girls!

In addition, needs may differ not only between different people, but individuals themselves can also have different needs. In the case of children of returnees from the former IS war zones, for example, a child whose mother is imprisoned may be angry with the mother on the one hand, but also miss her and long for her. They may have seen or experienced violence and great hardship in Syria and in the refugee camp, but also regard Syria as their home and miss familiar people and their familiar environment. Internal conflicts can also become evident in Germany, especially in relation to school. For example, a child whose parents are ideologically aligned with Salafism is forbidden to sing along in

music lessons. However, the child may want to sing along, to be part of the class community and not be an outsider. At the same time, they do not want to disappoint their parents and are afraid of the consequences associated with breaking the rules (punishment; fear of hell).

Example:



L.'s parents argue a lot and want to separate. L.'s father criticises her mother for becoming radical, saying that she's bad for their daughter. L. is afraid of her mother, who now suddenly lives according to very strict rules and hides her body in black robes, but at the same time she loves her and longs for her. She doesn't want to disappoint her father, who says that L. should have nothing more to do with her mother, but at the same time L. doesn't want to lose her mother either.

Coping with these different needs, ambivalences and conflicts of loyalty can be challenging and lead to children feeling very insecure and overwhelmed. In the exercise "My different needs"²⁹, children learn to recognise different needs and to understand that they can exist side by side. In this way, they practise gaining security and tolerating the situation, as well as developing the ability to find compromises.

For this exercise, the counsellor reads out a short scene or story in which a person has two contradictory needs. Solutions and compromises can then be worked out together for the situation outlined in the story, and these can, for example, be written down or drawn (depending on the age and creativity of the child). Drawing offers a particular advantage if there are difficulties in verbalising needs, e.g. due to language skills or because the child in question finds it easier to express feelings in pictures. Children are generally very creative and often find solutions or compromises that adults might not come up with. Parents are also experts with regard to their situation and, with the help of specific suggestions and questioning techniques, are most likely to find realistic solutions and compromises.

It is crucial that the counsellor reflects on and works on the following steps together with the child and, if necessary, with the parents:

1. Who has what needs?
2. Mutual acceptance of both or several needs
3. Consider solutions/compromises (write/paint)

²⁹ The exercise is based on Becker et al. (2021: 71f.).

Conflict	Example of solution/compromise
Example: D. Mum wants D. to come to eat her dinner, but D. would rather continue playing [Conflict between two people].	Mum wants D. to eat something so that she sleeps well and doesn't get hungry in the night [Need]. D. is having fun playing and doesn't want to interrupt this [Need]. Solution/compromise: Mum and D. may agree that D. can continue playing for another 15 minutes and will then come to eat her dinner.
Example: L. She doesn't want to disappoint her father, but wants to spend time with her mother [Inner conflict].	L. recognises and accepts that she has both these wishes/needs, and that they are both justified. She learns that there are different feelings that can upset you (fear, anger, sadness ...). L. decides to tell her parents about her needs and her feelings [Method for dealing with the issue].

Relationship Systems

A major part of counselling work consists of reflecting on family, friend or work relationships with the client, and working out the desire and potential for change in the relationship dynamics and qualities. For example, if the counsellor is dealing with parents whose child is directly under threat of radicalisation or affected by it, there are often many histories, relationships and feelings that may help to explain the radicalisation or that may be causing it, and these may have a reciprocal effect on the various people involved. In addition, there are many different potential feelings and behaviours which may currently exist or subsequently develop. The counsellor may notice that the client needs help and support with orientation and classification, for example, if they meander about in their stories, get lost in the details or jump around thematically, because the client is unable to locate where exactly their concern or perceived problem lies. In addition, systems can also develop their own dynamics, which must be considered in addition to their individual components. The system is therefore more than the sum of its parts (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 92f.). If something changes, this very quickly has an impact on everything else in the system, and also potentially on a number of other associated (sub)systems, such as intrafamilial relationships, the extended family system (e.g. relationships with other relatives) or the school or work context (e.g. relationships with friends and colleagues). Radicalisation processes can also cause corresponding changes and affect and involve different reference systems. Those affected sometimes break away from their old circle of friends and cut off contact, there may be a focus on new contacts and attachment figures from the group of "brothers" or "sisters", conflicts in the family may be a daily occurrence and former hobbies may be neglected or now be forbidden, either as a self-imposed act or due to the new belief systems. This is another reason why, from a systemic perspective, counsellors cannot consider the client without reference to their extended social environment and reference system. Successful and solution-oriented work with the client requires the inclusion of their relevant systems and corresponding relationships.

It is important to recognise that each system follows its own logic or functions (objectives). Everything that happens has a reason or function, which ultimately ensures that the system is held together. Counsellors should therefore be curious about the (initially often hidden) usefulness of the system for the

client's everyday life and consider it with respect (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 95). This approach is not self-evident, however. Often certain questions and perspectives help to reveal the hidden functions or advantages (objectives) (→ 6.3). Radicalisation can, for example, bring the family closer together (again), as everyone involved focusses together on this perceived problem. For the person affected, however, it can represent an attempt to overcome a crisis and a strategy for (re)structuring their own way of life. A clear sign of this is when parents or professionals notice improvements in school performance at the beginning of radicalisation, or that a teenager suddenly goes out less, or no longer drinks alcohol or takes drugs. In such cases, radicalisation processes can also be underestimated, especially at the beginning, because the strict rules that accompany the newly discovered beliefs may initially provide clear rules of conduct, some of which elicit a positive response in the environment. When analysing these system-relevant factors, it is therefore important to take a comprehensive and resource-oriented look at them. Reflection questions in this case could be:

- *"What, if anything, has improved since your daughter/son changed?"*
- *"Who or what is easier for them to deal with now?"*
- *"Who or what benefits from the current situation?"*
- *"What is it that still keeps the family together, even though the situation seems so difficult?"*
- *"What motivates you to address this topic here, with me?"*

For a system to be described as such, it needs rules, interactions, boundaries, participants and objectives (cf. Breiner/Polt 2020: 19). In a family system, for example, specific rules determine how processes, communication, actions, etc. are organised. These dynamics are accompanied by interactions. It is therefore useful to ask: *what has which effect on whom?* The boundaries define the system externally: *who is inside; who is outside?* How do the individual participants see this? These participants also have specific roles and functions within the system. Ultimately, the goals also significantly define the system, which means counsellors should also explicitly ask themselves and their clients *"What ... for?"* questions.

If counsellors want to bring order to the view of such a system together with the client, it is crucial to consider the given relationship structures (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 90) as well as the ties and feelings attached to them (→ 7.2). If behavioural patterns or relationship structures remain fairly stable, this is also something to which counsellors should pay

particular attention, because if something in a living system remains as it is, it is usually due to something or someone ensuring this consistency (cf. *ibid.*: 91). However, patterns that emerge from the system also develop over time, e.g. because they become more and more familiar and solidified through repetition (*emergence*). This is often the case when there are (intrafamilial) conflicts that seem almost impossible to resolve because the communication patterns have become entrenched and have a destructive effect (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 107). Counsellors in the field of religiously motivated extremism tend to see this more frequently, as relatives or parents often only turn to counselling when a situation has already become critical. This is precisely the point at which it can be useful to consciously work on communication (→ 6.2) and reflect on relationships, roles and their respective functions, e.g. by using visualisations such as genograms or constellations, a family/relationship board or sculpture work, or other pictorial representations such as the VIP map or the family coat of arms. All of these exercises are presented below.

Genogram

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper (flipchart) and pens (or software)

The genogram is a tool that has been widely used for a long time to depict family constellations and intrafamilial relationships, and engage in dialogue about them. As a systemic intervention, it can enable perceived problems to be contextualised, i.e. viewed and understood in a larger context (cf. Schwing/Fryszler 2018: 66).

The genogram itself is primarily based on the idea of the family tree. Ideally, counsellors develop it together with the client and, if possible, a schema is used as a guide. Although there are various ways of recording the people involved and their relationships to each other within a genogram, all the representations tend to be quite similar. This offers the advantage that counsellors can usually orientate themselves quickly in genograms with different layouts (cf. *ibid.*: 61). This standardisation therefore means that it offers security and orientation for counsellors in practical terms. At the same time, counsellors can respond to the wishes and particular circumstances of their clients by finding their own ways of recording and drawing what the client says and their individual characteristics in the genogram. The following is a basic suggestion for creating a genogram, but counsellors and counselling centres can customise and expand these to suit the individual. Depending on the counsellor and client, the design of the genogram can be as simple or as complex as desired. The following illustration shows typical symbols for representing the persons to be thematised:



Fig. 8: Genogram symbols

Instead of binary (male/female) gender designations, others can be used and represented either by symbols suggested by the client or by typographical symbols, e.g. those for transgender or intersex people. The person who is the subject of the counselling is indicated by double lines, which places a clear focus on the client. In some cases, it may also be useful to include pets. In addition to the symbols, the name, age, date of birth and even the date of death can be recorded for each person, as well as their profession, religious affiliation, conversion details, relocation, migration history and other relevant categories such as illnesses or cause of death. Foster or adopted children can also be indicated with a reference such as the letters F or A within the symbol. Persons whose details are unknown can also be included with a question mark, if they play a part in the perception of the problem or for the client.

Generally, the generational sequences are shown in the genogram, i.e. the generations are set out from top to bottom. This means the grandparents' generation is clearly distinguishable from the parents' and children's.

The person symbols are systematically connected to each other by means of solid lines. In this way, (biological) parenthood, common (biological) children, marriages, partner relationships, divorces and separations are made clear. In addition, the symbols for a marriage, partner relationship, separation or divorce can be added (see Fig. 9):

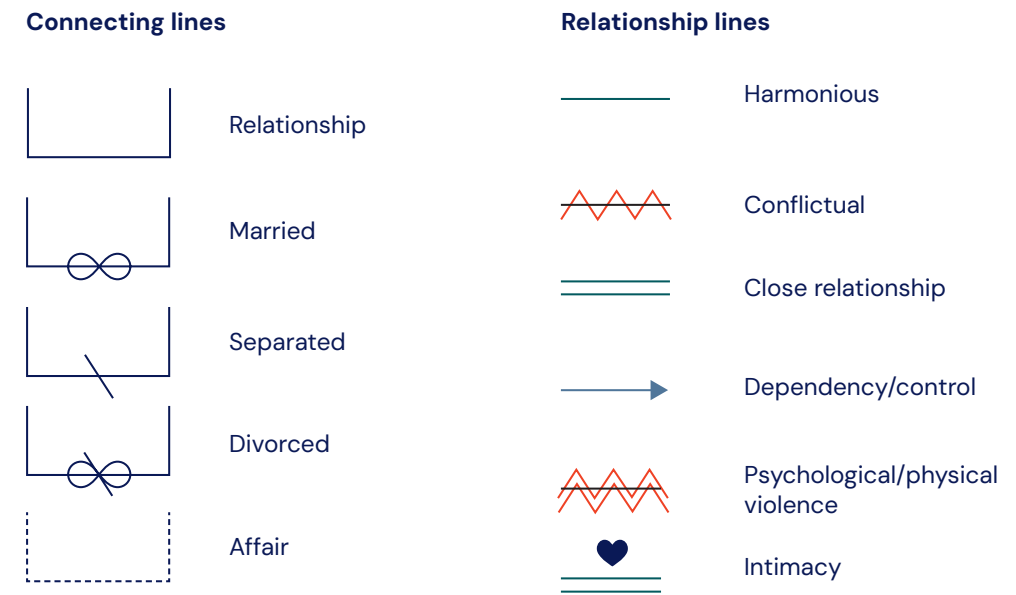


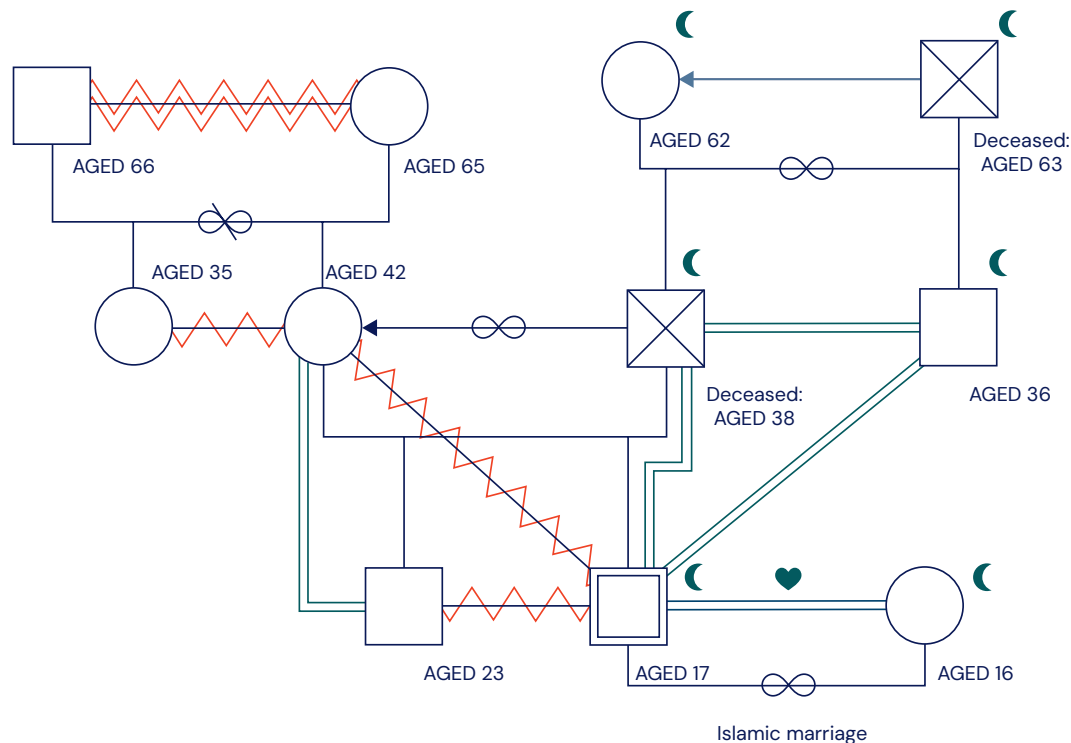
Fig. 9: Connection and relationship lines in the genogram

It can also be helpful to include the duration of the relationship or the date of separation. By circling individual persons (possibly using a new colour), it can be made clear which persons are currently living together. This is particularly helpful in "patchwork families", where the relationships can sometimes be quite complex and where a wide range of participants may play a role.

Additional lines can be drawn to make the relationship constellations and individual connections between them clear (also in a different colour, if necessary). Close and exceptionally close relationships are usually drawn with reinforcing lines and conflictual or broken relationships with a jagged line. Arrows on a line mark any existing directions.

Based on this schema, further important connecting lines and symbols can be added; counsellors can include these as standard or develop them in the counselling session with the client (e.g. for alliances, affairs, breaking off of contact, departure to and return from a war zone).

When introducing this exercise, the counsellor should explain it and invite the client to participate. While the client concentrates fully on their own family structure, connections, data and relationships, and verbalises them, the counsellor draws the genogram so that the client can see it, preferably on a flipchart sheet (horizontal format). This offers enough space to visibly record even extensive family structures. At the same time, the genogram can also be given to the client after the exercise, if required. First, the counsellor writes the client's name on the paper, ideally in such a way that there is still enough space above and to the side and, if the client has already formed their own family, also below:



☾ Muslims

Fig. 10: Genogram example

The advantage of starting with the client is that it emphasises that the appreciative focus is on them and their perspective: *It's about you. You are at the centre of the exercise.* The corresponding structural lines are then drawn in from the client's position and other people entered (parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents, etc.). Depending on the focus the counsellor and client wish this to have, it may be advisable to (initially) record only the core family. However, it is sometimes also useful to include the respective family constellations of the relatives (brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, cousins, nephews, nieces, etc.). As a rule, it is advisable to let the client decide who should be entered: *Who is (currently still) important?* However, an important point to note is that, ultimately, all persons who are central to the perceived problem should be entered. The counsellor should ensure that the genogram remains clear, as the aim is not necessarily to depict all the family members, but above all the subset of people who are important for the client. The drawing is a snapshot and is intended to show the current situation and the relevant subset.

The counsellor provides guidance through the exercise with the help of various questions. The questions asked at the beginning are designed primarily to obtain information, but later on the focus may be on in-depth questions regarding individual connections

and relationships. However, from the outset, incorporating positive attributions and questions to loosen things up can also be helpful, although this will ultimately depend on the individual counsellor and the client. Useful types of questions include:

- Who is (currently still) important?
- How old ...?
- What profession ...?
- Since when ...?
- How long ...?

For in-depth reflective work, it is useful to use different dialogue and questioning techniques (→ 6.3). In addition, the counsellor can check from time to time whether the client feels that the entries are appropriate and that the counsellor has understood them correctly. For example:

- *"Is it okay if I draw a line of conflict here?"*
- *"Is there anything that needs to be corrected?"*

Reflecting on the genogram is also about the client exploring and systematically reflecting on their own family structure, including experiences and stories. Momentous events such as displacement and expulsion, sudden death, suicide, emigration or, in the field of religiously motivated extremism in particular, conversion or departure to or return from a war zone are often particularly revealing. Traumas in the family history can also have an effect on subsequent generations, and influence decisions, experiences and feelings (→ 7.10). With the help of genograms, (previously hidden) schemas, patterns, potential connections and links can also be made visible.

For a more precise identification of individual persons and to support an explicit search for any resources that may be available, it may be useful to encourage the client to formulate three characteristics, for example, that apply to each person in the genogram; at least two of these should have positive connotations. Additional questions for reflection are:

- *"How are the individual people connected to each other?"*
- *"How would you describe the connection/relationship between ... and ...?"*
- *"How can you tell that there is a feeling of solidarity and cohesion between ... and ...?"*

- *“What do you think is the reason for the conflictual relationship between ... and ... ?”*

Ideally, the genogram should focus on the client themselves. However, it is also possible to develop a genogram from the perspective of another person. This is useful, for example, if a professional wants to better understand the client's family situation in order to develop starting points for resources and solutions. It is generally also useful, however, to ask circular questions in order to stimulate a change of perspective and understand different positions and roles in the system, and to empathise and develop (new) starting points for possible change based on (better) understanding:

- *“If you look at the genogram and the individual relationships/connections now: What do you think of it? What do you notice (in terms of positives and negatives)? Is there anything that surprised you? Is there anything you hadn't realised?”*
- *“What was the relationship like between ... and ... before the conversion happened, and afterwards?”*
- *“What was it like before?”*
- *“If you look at the genogram: What changes would you like to see? What should stay as it is? What would have to occur for this to happen? What could you do to help bring this about?”*
- *“If your daughter was here now and had heard what you said, and was now looking at the genogram you have drawn up: What do you think she would say about it? What would she think of it? Would she change anything or describe it differently to how you do? What would her wishes be?”*
- *“Suppose a year had passed and you drew the relationship lines again: What would your future self describe differently, if the most important areas needing improvement had improved during the year? How would this have come about? What would have happened in the meantime, if it was necessary to draw in more lines of conflict?”*

In principle, a genogram can also be drawn up in a family setting by two or more people. However, it may be helpful in this case for two or more genograms to be drawn up, in which each person records their own connecting lines. The genograms can then be compared with each other. In this scenario, the focus is on mutual understanding of different positions, attachments and roles within the system. Areas of consensus are also made clear. A great advantage lies in the possibilities offered by different

perspectives and processing. Acceptance of different points of view and perspectives can develop, for example (both/several diagrams literally exist side by side, and both/all are true), or a shared “wish genogram” can be drawn up incorporating key joint wishes for change, etc.

Constellations as reconstructions

Constellations of social systems, such as a family system, offer another way of making social systems not only visually but also *physically* tangible. In principle, there is great scope in terms of the different focuses that constellations can enable. In addition to family constellations, there can also be symptom constellations, decision constellations, constellations of potential futures, hierarchy constellations, team constellations, hidden constellations and many more. They are based on a very simple method in which relationships can be made visible and tangible through representation: “Processes of representation and unconscious or ‘hidden’ knowledge enable the implicit to develop into the explicit, the inner into the outer, the perceived into the vivid, the hidden into the visible, the incomprehensible into language, the discursive into ‘accessible’ and tangible images” (Schneider 2016: 12). Constellations can thus help a client to visualise an inner image in order to search out solutions to a crisis or problem.

Persons or figures can act as the representatives in such system constellations. As an alternative to persons, “floor anchors” can be used (e.g. in the form of cushions, or white/coloured sheets of paper, possibly labelled with names) or (empty) chairs. These can represent individuals, i.e. members of the system, or key individual aspects or parts of the system. The substituting persons or figures can portray the client themselves, their parents, children, grandparents, siblings, friends, teachers and employers or other relevant persons. It is also possible to represent feelings such as love, fear, sadness or anger, or aspects of life that are important to the client, such as faith, a career aspiration or an important experience, e.g. imprisonment. However, a distinction should be made between constellations with persons as representatives, and those which use figures (e.g. the family board, → 7.4). This is because the focus in a constellation with representatives is on a very physical experience – dynamics and movements are made visible and tangible, since the persons involved have a physical body and can speak and move. In contrast, the figures or objects used in system or family board constellations serve more to visualise images of actual states or desired states. They are more abstract and therefore, in contrast to constellations with persons, tend to operate less on a physical level and more on a cognitive one.

System/family/relationship board

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: As required, a family board and figures, possibly also a treasure chest (→ 7.5) with various objects

The “system board” – also known as a “family board” or “relationship board” – can be used to visualise complex relationship patterns, e.g. within the family, and make them tangible. Clients are given the opportunity to symbolically represent individual situations and relationship constellations, and also the associated feelings and wishes. This is done by placing physical objects or figures representing situations, people, feelings and other relevant aspects in a defined field and in relation to each other. This enables clients to make their own inner experience outwardly visible and reflect on it in a new way. The picture created should not be taken as a representation of reality, but rather a reflection of the client’s subjective perceptions, i.e. as a hypothesis-forming image (cf. Caby/Caby 2017a: 281).

A major advantage of this method is that it works relatively independently of language, as discussion of and reflection on processes, relationships, experiences, feelings and desires for change takes place at a meta-level, i.e. via the symbolic constellation itself. “In the therapeutic process, it is particularly suitable for trying out previously unrecognised alternatives to current problems, and also for reconstructing past events and concretising future scenarios” (Wirth/Kleve 2019). Due to its intuitive approach, the exercise can therefore be carried out with a wide range of clients, regardless of age, and is also suitable for clients who have difficulty confidently expressing themselves linguistically or verbally (e.g. due to their educational or language background). It also lends itself particularly well to work with children, where animal figures can also be used as symbols.

For counsellors and clients, the exercise has the additional advantage that the interpersonal relationships set out on the board become clear and can be reflected upon in a tangible form. Talking about the constellations can also lead to shared interpretations that facilitate mutual understanding and strengthen the working relationship. Another advantage over other means of communication and forms of depiction is that this particular approach offers an opportunity for reflection that is often missing in other methods (cf. *ibid.*). It is therefore a resource that is particularly useful for jointly developing individual goals and solutions.

As a method, the system board is suitable for various

counselling settings and also for case supervision (→ 8). It can be carried out with individual clients, but also with several family members together. If working with more than one person, however, care should be taken to ensure that the setting out of constellations is carried out in parallel, and that these are then compared and reflected on together. It is important that both counsellor and client feel comfortable with and confident about the method. A suitable setting should be provided (e.g. a private, undisturbed room) and the client should also be at the point where they are ready for an in-depth discussion of a specific topic or relationship structure. This also implies that the client can and may decline an invitation from the counsellor to take part in the exercise (cf. Breiner/Polt 2020: 34).

As the different names suggest, the system/relationship/family/resource board is available in several versions and variants. In addition to classic variants, computer-based virtual constellations are also available, but these would probably only be used when absolutely necessary, as they cannot provide the symbolic staging in a tangible space which is an important feature of the in-person versions. Most versions consist of a wooden board in one or more parts, often with lines or a square marked on it representing a symbolic “inside” and “outside”. Some boards may be divided in the middle, to symbolise two different sides that can be put together or pulled apart, for example. In addition, there are usually wooden figures in various sizes, shapes and colours; these are generally quite simple and usually have a face indicated. This can be helpful in order to consciously include the individual figures’ lines of sight in the set-up.

If no proprietary system or family board set is available, one can easily be made using materials that are to hand. This is useful for outreach counselling work, for example, where the counselling may take place at the client’s home. In this case, a large sheet of paper with lines drawn on, and objects in the room, can be used to facilitate impromptu constellations. The use of private objects, with their symbolic power, also offers the opportunity to explore meaningful interpretations. For example, which object is selected to represent a particular person or feeling? Is the association made quickly or only after some consideration? Combining items already present in the counselling room with materials provided by the counsellor can also be helpful. In this way, special symbols can facilitate the incorporation of specific people, feelings, ideas, etc. in a standard set-up.



Materials treasure chest

When working on constellations on the system/family board, some counsellors like to work with their own “treasure chest” filled with special materials. The

range of interpretations and attributions is sometimes increased by the provision of different materials such as pens, shells, desk objects, sweets, pebbles, glass stones, toy/animal figures, chess pieces, pieces of string, ribbons or modelling clay. These objects can variously appear and feel round and smooth, angular with sharp corners, pleasantly cool or malleable, and can have positive or negative associations. An object can be chosen consciously or unconsciously, and in either case can stimulate in-depth discussion and reflection.

As with all exercises, it is crucial here to present it in the form of an invitation, which the client can and may decline if they are sceptical about it.



Fig. 11: Materials treasure chest

The system/family board does not need to be explained at length, as it is generally very intuitive to use. It therefore may be better to provide as little explanation as possible and simply let the clients try it out. There is essentially no “right” or “wrong” set-up. All creative ideas can therefore be initially received with an enquiring and open attitude on the part of the counsellor. Breiner/Polt (2020: 35) suggests the following short introduction as an invitation to the exercise: “To get a good overview of the topic, I invite you to lay out your situation on the system board. Choose objects to represent all the significant people and feelings, and any other valuable information, which you need right now to get a good overview.” It may also be useful to focus on the client’s specific social system or family: “I would like to ask you to choose a figure for each member of the family, and to place the figures on the board as they stand in relation to each other in the family. There are large, small, round or square

figures to choose from [...]. And you can use as much of the board’s surface as you wish. The figures can stand far apart or close together [...] And they have eyes, so they can look at each other. You can take as much time as you need” (Ludewig/Wilken 2000: 21). Above all, it is important to explain to the clients that they are symbolically placing the social system on the board, with regard to the individuals’ relationships to each other and ideally also with reference to a specific topic. For example, an index client might be asked to organise the family according to how family members perceive their current relationships with each other, in relation to the topic of conversion, for example.

The exercise may proceed very differently, depending on the client. It might be that the client can assign and position the figures quite quickly, without seeming to think about it too much. However, it is also possible that the constellation process itself takes time, and that the client repeatedly hesitates and makes corrections. It is important to let the client themselves determine the nature and pace of the exercise, and only offer questions or encouragement if they seem unsure. Useful questions or comments might include:

- “Is there anyone or anything else that should be on the board?”
- “Who or what is (still) important to you?”
- “Would you like to change anything?”
- “It’s your picture – you decide.”

The counsellor should hold back and merely observe, especially at the beginning of the exercise, as long as the client is carrying out the exercise independently and placing the figures or objects.



Touching and intervention

The counsellor should, based on an attitude of valuing the picture created and the client’s feelings, generally refrain from touching, moving or changing the figures or the board; instead, they should use questions to encourage the client to complete or change the picture themselves (cf. Breiner/Polt 2020: 110). There are, however, exceptions to this, where a counsellor may intentionally carry out an intervention. If, for example, the client repeatedly complains about a person and is seemingly unable to change anything, the counsellor may intervene by removing the figure from the board, thus creating an intentional impetus. It must naturally be made clear to the client that this

is not possible in real life. However, the confrontation ("So, the boss is gone! How do you feel now?") can allow new feelings to come to the fore and be reflected upon, and the client may possibly even realise that some of the advantages of the person's presence are now lacking (cf. *ibid.*: 112).

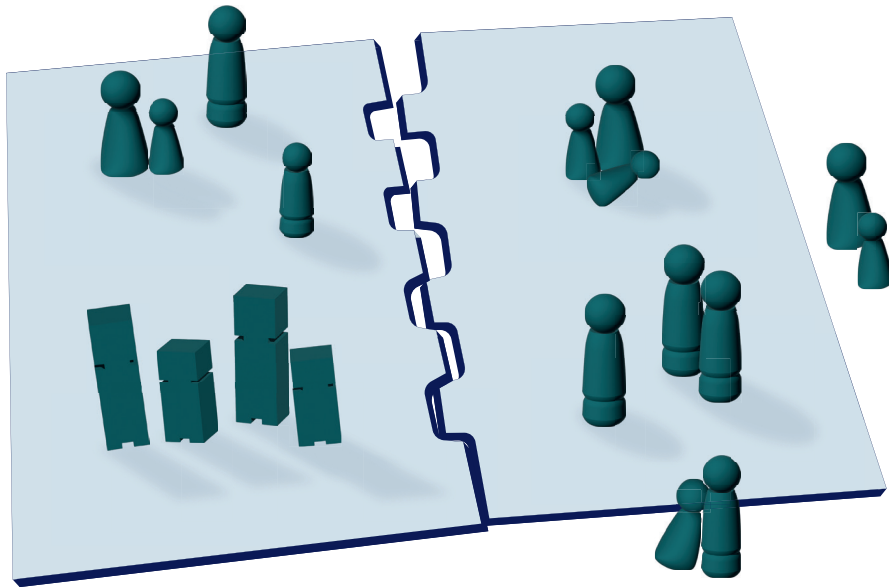


Fig. 12: The system board – an example

The counsellor, while observing the client setting up the constellation, will be able to take note of many aspects. For example: who was put in position first, and who was last? Which figures are close together and which are far apart? Who is a large figure, and who is small? Which direction is each figure looking in? What are the distances between the figures? Once the first picture has been created by the client, this can be regarded as completion of the first intervention, i.e. something from inside the individual has been brought to the outside so that it can be seen. Even if there is no specific discussion about this, it can trigger a chain of processes within the client. Breiner/Polt (2020: 36) emphasise that the exercise may sometimes end at this point. This may be the case if, for example, the setting up of the constellation has itself led to a moment of realisation, or if the issue cannot be probed any further, or if the client has received a satisfactory answer from it, or if there is a considerable emotional burden and a break is necessary. In these circumstances, it may be advisable to end the exercise at this point (for the time being).

If a more in-depth discussion seems useful, the exercise now offers the advantage that such discussion can be in the form

of meta-communication – i.e. a discussion specifically about the picture and the figures. It is often easier for clients to see things from another's perspective by means of the picture, or to talk about themselves in the third person. In this way, the distance created by using symbols can enable the client to get closer to their own reflections and feelings. While setting up the constellation or subsequently, clients often talk about which figure represents which person in the constellation.



The inexpressible – hidden constellations

If something has been omitted from the picture, the counsellor can explicitly ask the client whether it is possible or necessary for them to name the figure or object that has been omitted. In such cases, it is useful to point out to the client that they can place anything they feel is important within the constellation, but that they do not need to share or talk about anything unless they wish to. This offers them the safety to address and reflect on topics or secrets, even highly shameful ones, without having to specifically name them. Counsellors working in the field of religiously motivated extremism often encounter a complex of issues in which there is something that the client cannot (initially) discuss, e.g. experiences of war and displacement, criminal acts committed by the client themselves or experiences of sexual violence. "Clients can find it [...] very freeing not to have to disclose the details in order to reach a solution. Surprisingly, disclosure is often not necessary – and, even more astonishingly, it may actually be counterproductive at times" (Breiner/Polt 2020: 127).³⁰

Once the first picture has been created, the counsellor can explicitly encourage conscious reflection and narration: "Take your time and look at your picture from different angles. If you wish, tell me what first comes into your mind when you look at the picture – maybe a feeling, a word or a sentence. Perhaps the picture also triggers a physical reaction for you. Whatever occurs to you, feel free to tell me about it, if you wish" (*ibid.*: 36). Direct questions are also useful, as they can open up a range of possibilities ("Everything could look completely different here") (cf. *ibid.*: 37). Further questions for reflection might include:

- "What spontaneous thoughts spring to mind when you look at this picture?"
- "What is the most important thing you see here?"
- "Do you have a title or a caption for this picture?"

³⁰ For a detailed overview of the exercise, possible approaches and suitable questions, cf. Breiner/Polt 2020.

- *“What do you think and what do you feel when you look at this picture?”*

Various questioning techniques can be used during the exercise (→ 6.3). Circular questions can often be particularly helpful: “The client can give the characters a voice, empathise with different people and perspectives, experience closeness and distance or lay out ‘solution pictures’” (Caby/Caby 2017a: 108). The counsellor may also want to share their observations with the client and present these to the client in the form of mirroring or hypotheses:

- *“How do you feel about this picture? How did you feel when you set up the individual figures? What did you find easy, and what was more difficult?”* [question about feelings]
- *“I noticed that you only put yourself in place at the end, when all the other figures were already in position. Why do you think that was?”* [mirroring]
- *“When you put yourself in place right at the end, I wondered whether you also feel like you always come last in the family.”* [hypothetical question]
- *“With the third figure, your brother, you repeatedly moved it and then hesitated. Do you want to tell me what thoughts were going through your mind then?”* [mirroring]
- *“If your family could see this picture, how do you think they would react? Is there anything that would surprise them? Who would be most surprised, and who wouldn’t be surprised at all?”* [circular question]
- *“If you look at where your mother is looking, who or what does she have a good view of from there, and who or what is she not able to see so clearly? How happy do you think she is in this position? What would she say if she were here now?”* [circular question; change of perspective]

Once the current situation has been sufficiently reflected upon, there often tends to be a smooth transition to laying out desired scenarios. Particularly when the client talks about what they find negative, they naturally tend to move the figures and give the reasons for this. Once again, the counsellor can choose from a wide range of different questioning techniques and select those that seem appropriate:

- *“We’ve talked about how your figure is quite lonely and sad because they feel alone. What would have to change in the picture to make them feel less lonely, and ideally more secure?”* [change question]
- *“If you look at the picture, what should stay as it is?”* [resource question]
- *“Suppose the situation were to get worse for you – what would that look like in concrete terms? What would have to occur for this to happen? How can you protect yourself from this? Who or what could help you with this?”* [aggravation question; resource question]
- *“When you describe this feeling of fear – what object or figure could symbolise that fear? Where on the board is this fear?”* [locating feelings]
- *“When you say that your faith helps you to better cope with all the challenges, where would you place this faith on the board? What could represent it?”* [resource question]
- *“Suppose there was a miracle overnight and all the problems disappeared. You wake up in the morning and the picture of your family is just as you would like it to be. What would that look like?”* [miracle question]

The point at which the exercise is completed depends on the individual. With some clients, it will only take half an hour; for others, it may extend over several sessions. The exercise can have different effects and take varying amounts of time, depending on how it is received by the client and how the counsellor and client engage in the joint process. Some clients need the constellation primarily to visualise their own situation and their emotional world, and to become aware of their inner world, while for others, it brings a moment of realisation that comes from experiencing a change of perspective by viewing the situation through another’s eyes. Other clients use it to explore what they actually want in terms of change and to discover how it would be possible to achieve this – who and what would have to be different, what the route to this might look like and who or what could potentially help them. Counsellors often intuitively sense when the time is right to bring the exercise to an end. Ideally, the decision should be made by the client, but the counsellor can certainly invite them to end the process (cf. Breiner/Polt 2020: 101). For example:

- *“You wanted to take a look at your topic using the system board – is there still something you’d like to look at or have you now finished exploring the topic?”*

- “With regard to your topic, have you seen everything you wanted to see – or is there still something else to do?”

The exercise can be brought to an end at the end of the counselling session, for example, or if the client has experienced a high level of emotional stress, or concrete results have been achieved that the client can take away with them without overburdening themselves with further reflection in the current moment. At the end of the exercise it can be helpful in any event to return to the starting or desired position, as this often has an unburdening effect (cf. Wirth/Kleve 2019).

“I invite you to use your solution picture in any way you wish. Take a picture of it or save it in your heart, if you want to. Take with you what is important and valuable to you” (Breiner/Polt 2020: 101).

A positive conclusion here is just as important as in other exercises, and it can be particularly helpful to look at any resources that have been developed or activated. Specific projects can also be agreed if necessary. Offering the client the opportunity to photograph the picture of the actual or desired situation may enable them to take away something tangible. However, it can also be useful to intentionally leave the picture in the counselling setting. Counsellors who wish to take photos for documentation purposes should always ask the client before doing so, and be transparent about why this would be useful (e.g. in order to be able to follow up on the constellation in subsequent sessions).

Constellation with representatives

Target groups: Professionals 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Additional people; a private room with sufficient space

Constellations with representatives can be used, for example, to reveal entanglements or unfavourable dynamics (cf. Grote/Fenzl 2022). They can also be used to mark the conclusion of inner processes or as a farewell ritual. Their effect can be healing, releasing and strengthening, but may also not be entirely explicable (cf. *ibid.*). It is therefore necessary to exercise caution and circumspection in their use, as constellations can sometimes have unfavourable effects. In the context of social environment, distancing and exit counselling, constellations with representatives have proven to be very effective in work with professionals; however, due to the special nature of the topic, they have not yet been used with index clients or their close family members.

It is recommended that counsellors without systemic or

therapeutic training initially try out the constellation method themselves, including acting as a representative if necessary, in order to experience how this special method operates. This can prove useful, for example, if the constellation method is used as part of case counselling involving colleagues (→ 8). Another possibility is for the counsellor to act in a supporting role in their first constellation, alongside more experienced, trained colleagues. There is virtually no other systemic method where the principle of experience better applies than to constellation work with representatives.

Constructivist constellations are primarily about *finding a solution* that is appropriate for the client – in this case, the professional receiving counselling. In phenomenological constellations, the focus is on *the ordering* of things and themes, i.e. individuals finding their place. Grote/Fenzl (2022) emphasise that both approaches are based on the fundamental assumption that change occurs primarily through experiencing rather than explanation. While setting up constellations, things become tangible, such as resistance, and can be seen as a cooperative signal or even a treasure trove (cf. Grote/Fenzl 2022), as they reveal inner attitudes, feelings and processes and make them available for reflection and discussion.

Producing a constellation with a professional as a client in order to work on an issue, feeling, process or decision can be very useful if the client appears less receptive to solely talking, or reflects back that they are not really getting anywhere with discussions. In cases where there are particularly sensitive or emotional issues, the method can also have an unburdening effect, because a significant part of the work is done by reflecting, which is to a certain extent carried out with the help of and by the representatives. As an outside observer, the client looks at their own perceived problem or issue in a completely new way and decides from that position which dynamics, statements and insights they accept as helpful, and which they do not. The client generally only becomes part of the constellation when there is work on a solution; in such cases, the constellation serves to strengthen them and, rather than confronting them directly with the stress, creates a distance from it and a new perspective on it. Compared to dialogue and questioning techniques alone, a constellation of inner processes or systems as an intervention measure often offers a completely different approach and way of dealing with the problem within a counselling session.

Counsellors who offer a constellation with representatives exercise and invite the client to attend (→ 7) usually arrange a separate appointment with the client in advance for this, as more organisation is required than with other exercises. An appropriate number of people must also be found and be available as representatives (e.g. from the counselling centre's own team). A private and sufficiently large space should be used for it, which allows for a sense of distance to be perceptible and visible and where the representatives can move around.

There should be a clearly defined issue or topic that needs to be addressed with the help of the constellation, e.g. how the professional's working relationships with the family and index client have changed following the departure of a family member to Syria to join the Islamic State, and their return. A guiding question here might be: as a professional, how can I help the family to get back together after this person's return?

A special feature of the method is that it opens up, for the professional as a client, a new opportunity for experiencing – they are able to observe themselves, the relatives, issues, feelings, dynamics, desires, crises and possible solutions from the outside. This gives them a new or at least a different perspective. Changes in perspective can be experienced physically, and it may on occasion be possible for the client to ask the representatives a question or to explain something to them that it is not possible to say to the real person or that the client would not dare to say aloud.

The client, who determines the positions, is the focus of the staging of the constellation. For a family constellation relating to the person suspected of having been radicalised or the person at risk of radicalisation, the client (the professional) first selects from those present the corresponding representatives for the relevant people in the family system the professional is working with, e.g. index client, mother, father, siblings and grandparents, as well as a person to represent themselves. The client then positions these people in relation to each other. The client should be advised that it is not only the position of the individual representatives that is important, but also potentially their posture and the direction of their gaze within the room. Clients tend not to require much instruction on the positioning because it often features in our use of metaphors. For example: "His parents always back him", "There was an empty place at his side", "His boss was always breathing down his neck", etc.

The special thing about this type of constellation is that the representatives quickly start to feel, speak and react as the people in the actual family system do, even though they do not know them. The client staging the constellation states the names, if required, of the people the representatives are representing, and their place in the system – although the method also works if these details are not explicitly stated, that is, there can also be people, topics, experiences, etc. in the constellation that are not named.

Once all the representatives in the room are aligned with each other, the actual work with the constellation begins. The client and counsellor step out of the picture, and consider for a short while the network of relationships that has now become clear. When the client feels the arrangement is right, the representatives are questioned one after another. The counsellor will often ask the client at this point which person in the picture they feel most interested in and use this to begin to explore the client's feelings and thoughts.



Example:

D. has been in Syria. On his return, he realises that everything in the family has changed and there is less cohesion. Ms B. regularly visits the family as a family support worker and wants to support the family in learning to communicate with each other without violence. She has already become a trusted person for D. She therefore sets up a constellation reflecting the current family situation and expresses D.'s wish to regain the closeness within the family. She is primarily interested in D.'s mother's view of the current situation, as D. and his mother are the ones who most frequently have arguments, some of which have led to violent confrontations on both sides.



Example:

Counsellor:	C., as D.'s mother, how are you doing here in your position? What do you feel? Who in the room do you feel a connection with?
Representative:	I feel quite lonely here. My husband is standing at the other end of the room and doesn't even look at me. And my mother-in-law stares at me from a distance, almost angrily. And my son has also turned his back on me. That makes me very sad. I love him and would like to have him closer to me. I only feel connected to my little daughter next to me. She holds my hand and looks up at me.
Counsellor:	So I'm hearing that you don't feel so comfortable in your position right now. Do you have an impulse to move that you would like to act on? Or would you like to say something to somebody?
Representative:	Mmm. I don't know. I'd like to be closer to my son. But I'm also afraid that I'll alienate myself from my daughter. And I would like to ask my husband: "Why don't you come to my side and stand by your family?"

It is usually helpful for the counsellor to briefly summarise the key points made by the representatives again and so remind the client of them. All the representatives are now similarly asked questions and their feelings elicited. The client (the professional) should initially just listen, although they may also ask questions of the representatives if they wish. Finally, in a gathering in the round, the representative portraying the client should be asked questions. Once this has been done, the counsellor addresses the client directly again.

Example:

Counsellor: Ms B., you have now heard a great deal from the representatives – you know how they feel and how they perceive their positions. From what you have heard: What has had an effect on you? What do you perhaps recognise yourself?

Client (professional): Well, I recognise the feeling of loneliness that everyone has described. Although I was surprised to also hear that D.'s mother is very sad that her son has turned his back on her and currently only looks at me. I didn't realise that at all. That surprised D. too, because he always thought that, as his mother has his sister, she's actually less interested in him. I have always viewed D.'s mother's looks as observing, rather than expressing love, or even jealousy towards me. For me, that explains why she has perhaps been so uncooperative towards me. And the father ... yes, he always keeps his distance from everyone, not just me ...

After the client has been encouraged to compare what they have heard with their own perceptions, the counsellor gives the signal for people to move back into the constellation. The representatives should now align themselves and position themselves in relation to each other so that they feel more comfortable. It is advisable to allow some minutes for the representatives to move around within the system, as it can take some time before the "perfect" new system is found. While one representative, in their role, may feel that the positions are too close, another might feel they are too distant. One representative may want the other person to look at them, while the other repeatedly tries to escape their gaze. This process of movement also mirrors what can happen in real life during processes of change, when people may struggle to regain different degrees of closeness and distance in their relationships. Once movements within the system cease, the representatives are questioned again, as in the first constellation round:

- *"Why did you stand and position yourself like that?"*
- *"What was important to you in that decision?"*
- *"How did you experience the reorganisation process?"*
- *"And how do you feel now?"*
- *"What would you still like to change?"*

These are all points that the counsellor can ask about and the answers can provide the client with new and interesting insights. The representative portraying the client should always

be the last to be questioned. It is probable that, even with this new set-up, not everyone in the system will be satisfied, and a further round of moving around might be appropriate. Before this happens, however, the client themselves should be given the opportunity to describe what they have seen and experienced. This process of alignment with the client's point of view is crucial for the entire constellation, as it can serve as a corrective to the representatives, to minimise the risk of them acting out their own issues in their roles in the constellation. Counsellors should always be aware of the risk of potential transference by the representatives, and also remind the client that the statements expressed in the exercise do not represent objective truth, but are only intended to stimulate reflection.

It is generally the case that, when the representatives are free to move around again, they become active and realign themselves. With each round of movement, the constellation tends to approach a state in which the system again becomes relatively stable and there is less desire to change it. However, in view of the time available, counsellors should plan for a maximum of three or four rounds of movement. It is unlikely that everyone's needs will be fully harmonised with those of others. But achieving such a state of perfection is in any case unlikely, either in the constellation or in real life. The newly formed system can, however, offer a perspective in which the wishes and needs, especially of the client, are given greater consideration. In order to give the client further opportunity to experience this, and so perhaps awaken the motivation for personal change, not only are all the representatives once again questioned at the end of the constellation and the client allowed to comment on what they have seen and heard, but the client themselves also becomes part of the constellation again. They step into the constellation and take the place of the person representing them, in the same position and, if applicable, with the same posture. For example, if the representative has been holding the hand of another person in the constellation, it is important that the client also does this. In this way, the client is given the opportunity to experience the same feeling that their representative previously did. During this process, it is advisable to simply let the picture talk and not dissect it with too many questions. An experience such as this can often subconsciously trigger processes of change that the client may not be able to immediately articulate during the exercise. However, one question which might give clients a concrete impulse for change is to ask which first step the client themselves would need to take, in real life, to come closer to achieving a similar constellation. Experience has shown that, at this point, many clients are able to name this first step.

Once the final step of the client taking up their role in the constellation has been completed, the representatives can be released from their roles and the exercise concluded. Since constellations are also generally a highly emotional experience

for the representatives, this setting aside of their roles should be combined with a symbolic act. The procedure in most standard versions of the exercise is for the client to be asked to approach each representative in turn, thank them and say: *"I release you from your role. You are now [person's real name] again."* This releasing from the role can be further supported by asking the representative to turn around in a circle or shake hands with the client.

Any further debriefing after the conclusion of the exercise should be kept to a minimum, to allow this very intensive exercise to have its effect on the client. However, in view of the counsellor's duty of care towards the client, particularly after a highly emotional experience, it is advisable to ask whether the client requires anything else from the counsellor in order to be able to leave the session in a steady frame of mind.

Sculpture work: visualising feelings

Target groups: Index clients, relatives



Time frame: Session exercise



Materials: Additional people; a private room with sufficient space

The "sculpture work" technique is one of the most interesting, experience-intensive methods developed in systemic therapy. The client, using representatives and/or themselves, is encouraged to set up a picture of current relationships and topics, making use of postures, gestures, lines of sight, positioning and spatial distance (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 280; Ebbecke-Nohlen 2012: 378). The client becomes "a sculptor of their own life" and can make relationship situations, problems, feelings or resources physically tangible and available to be described and observed for outsiders through the picture created. This enables the client's inner view of their reality to be seen and ultimately questioned. New perspectives on a topic may arise which can generate further potential actions for resolving problems. In some cases, sculpture work can reduce complexity for clients, as they can use a solution-oriented approach to set up and understand different options for action. However, if clients are expressing overwhelming situations or even trauma, feeling them physically in a sculpture can increase the problems' complexity and cause further stress (see Ebbecke-Nohlen 2012: 379). Sculpture work is therefore not recommended for dealing with such topics.

The exercise usually begins with the counsellor inviting the client to visualise the situation described by creating a picture. Sometimes the impulse to do sculpture work may also come from the counsellor, who may wish to use this type of constellation

work to make something clearer to the client. In the exercise, the client can form a sculpture using their own body, objects in the room or other people (family members or the counsellor, as applicable). The counsellor can support the client by mentioning that, as with Greek statues, details such as sight lines or arm positioning can be important to convey feelings or reveal attitudes. This can encourage the client to experiment with expressing more subtle aspects.

Once the sculpture has been created, the client and, if applicable, the representatives remain in their position. This often gives rise to initial feelings and impressions that need to be formulated and given space. These are discussed and, if appropriate, new perceptions identified. The counsellor can further support the process by asking questions, e.g. about physical stance and associated feelings. If, for example, the body positions seem very taxing, this may be a subject for discussion.

In many cases, however, the client themselves also expresses a wish for the position to be changed. It is often useful to follow up on such stimuli and allow a new sculpture to emerge; this may then reflect the approach to a solution that the client has been seeking. In such cases, the sculpture can make this wish and possibly also the goal of the counselling more visible. Positive feelings of longing, joy and affection can arise and provide motivation for the ongoing counselling process. This exercise may even enable clients to resolve entrenched positions by expressing physically things that may not have been talked about for a long time, such as feelings of affection, caring and emotional security that have been displaced by conflict.



Example³¹: Mother and daughter in a counselling session

Mother (client):	My daughter has only been interested in her religion for months now and no longer does anything with the family. She wants nothing more to do with us; she only follows her own interests!
Counsellor (interrupting):	I'd like to show you a picture of what I just saw, if that's okay. Please point at your daughter again with your index finger. (Turning to the daughter): What do you do when your mother says things like this to you?
	The daughter folds her arms and turns away from her mother.
Counsellor:	Is that what you want to achieve?
Mother:	No.

³¹ This example of a setting is based on one from Virginia Satir (cf. von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 280).

Counsellor:	Please form a picture, with your daughter, to show what you would like to achieve.
	The mother turns to face her daughter, and they look directly at each other.
Counsellor:	How can you achieve what you want? Try to express that now, in a picture.
	The mother thinks, and then stretches out her open hand to her daughter.

The VIP map

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Template (→ 12.4), pencil

It can sometimes be confusing during the counselling process if the counsellor and the client discuss many different individuals who were or are important to the client or the index client. The client may, for example, repeatedly bring up many people in the relevant environment (e.g. from their family, circle of friends, school or work environment, other professionals or even people from extremist circles). These people may be completely forgotten if they do not seem to play a particular role in the topics being discussed, even though they may represent useful resources (including for deradicalisation or distancing processes). Their potential usefulness as resources and the fact that social contacts and relationships may be able to provide information about the client's (emotional or physical) connection to radical or extremist circles makes it useful to gain an overview of the people in the index client's environment. The "VIP map" exercise serves this purpose. It helps counsellors to gain an insight into and an overview of the client's important attachment figures and any existing resources. It also provides clients with an overview and tool for reflection by visualising their own environment and (potential) resources and offering an opportunity to talk about them and, if necessary, identify desired changes and ways to bring them about.

The VIP map graphically depicts the "VIPs" in a client's life and how close they are to the client. The most important people for the client are entered onto a diagram containing four sections. The client is at the centre of the VIP map; ideally, this is the person receiving the counselling. However, it may also be possible for the exercise to be carried out by someone else: sometimes it can be as helpful for the relatives or professionals to create a VIP map for the index client. The four sections are

labelled *family, friendships, school or work* and *professional environment*. These sections can be adapted, depending on the client. For example, in the case of index clients it is helpful to add *religious community* as a category.

Counsellors can use a template for the exercise (→ 12.4) or they can draw an outline of the map themselves on a sheet of A4 paper or a flipchart sheet. After the counsellor has invited the client to participate in the exercise, explained its process and purpose and obtained the client's consent to proceed, they draw the map with its four sections and the client's name is written in the centre.

The client now takes their time to think about the people in their environment and write them on the map. They decide which section to start with. "Leaving the decision to [the client] means giving them control and influence – important prerequisites for them to be able to become involved in the situation and a good basis for trustful discussion" (Herwig-Lempp 2007: 209). The client may want to add categories, or may ask whether they can also enter people who are deceased, or in which category a friend from school should be entered. These wishes and decisions rest with the clients themselves, so it is helpful to make it clear that they are the client's responsibility: "Would you like to enter them? Are they important to you? Where do you think they belong?" (cf. *ibid.*: 209f.). At the same time, the counsellor should limit the number of people entered to a maximum of between five and seven per section, so that it is easier to have an overview. If the clients enter each individual person on an index card (or enter them in pencil), there is the advantage of being able to subsequently position them on the flipchart sheet or VIP map, and move them as necessary (a magnetic board or pinboard is useful here), make corrections more easily and visualise actual and desired positions. The map shows a picture of the existing situation and can be labelled with a date. This makes it clear that changes in relationship structures are part of a process and that they are possible.

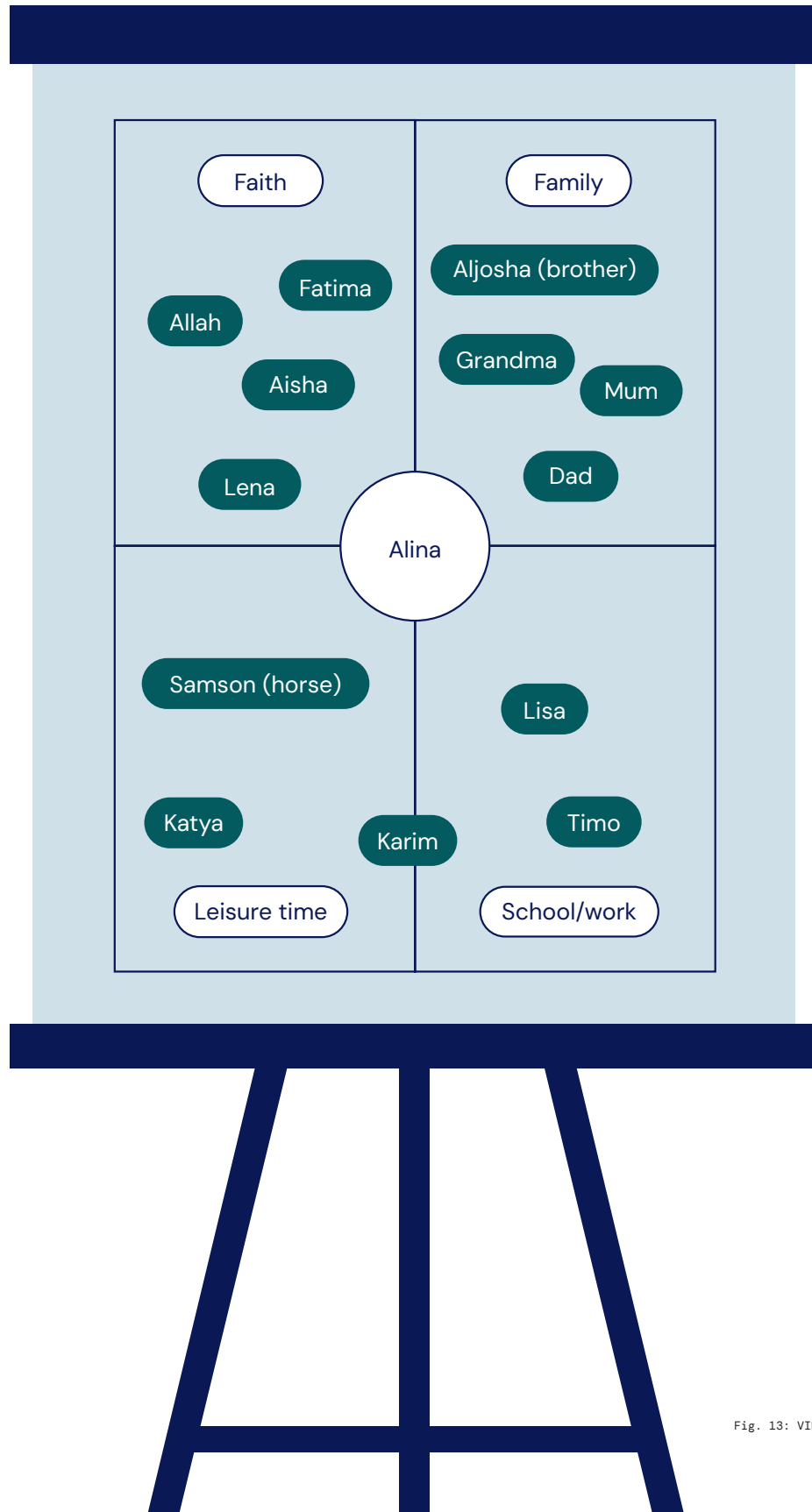


Fig. 13: VIP map example

The main focus of the exercise is to talk about the VIP map. The counsellor can encourage the client to say or explain something about the respective person, e.g. why the person is important and why they have this position on the VIP map. There are also a number of different resource-oriented questioning techniques that can be incorporated into the discussion:

- *"In what way is ... important to you? What do they mean to you?"*
- *"What kind of support could ... offer you? Could we perhaps include them in dealing with the challenge you're currently facing?"*
- *"You've marked ... as closest to you. What do you appreciate about ...? What do they like about you?"*
- *"What are ...'s strengths? What are they particularly good at?"*
- *"What do you think your friend would say if they were asked to describe you? What would be your position on their VIP map?"*
- *"Which of these people has perhaps been in a similar difficult situation to the one you are in now? How did they solve or overcome it?"*
- *"Who could give you a few useful tips on the subject?"*
- *"Who can you talk to if you have problems?"*
- *"Who could you stay with for a few days if you couldn't go home now?"*
- *"Which person would you maybe like to see in a different position? Where would that be? What would have to happen for that to change? Who or what would be necessary or helpful for that?"*

At the end of the exercise, the VIP map can be given to the client. It may be useful for the counsellor to ask whether they can photocopy it or take a photo. This is helpful for case documentation (→ 5.1), but can also be useful for further peer case consultation (→ 8) (cf. Herwig-Lempp 2007: 2015f.).

The family coat of arms

Target groups: Index clients, relatives



Time frame: Session exercise ⌚

Materials: Paper, (coloured) pens, other craft materials as necessary

If the counsellor is working on the topic of family and resources in a family setting or with an individual client, it may be helpful to use the “family coat of arms” method. This is a way of gathering together any resources that there may be in the family, making them visible and discussing them. On the one hand, this can broaden the perspective, as the focus often tends to be on the perceived problems, and less on things that are going well and can be viewed as positive. And on the other hand, the resources developed or visualised can point to (new) solutions and generate ideas for where help and support may be found.

Although very few families have an actual family coat of arms, the concept is familiar from heraldic art and is still used in films and books. Historically, “a coat of arms [...] was an enduring symbol of a person, family, group of people, community or organisation, created according to certain rules, which was originally applied to the shields of knights. There is usually a story behind the creation of an individual coat of arms that explains the reason for a mythical creature, a heraldic animal, a symbol or a particular colour being chosen” (Campana 2010: 103f.).

This exercise can be used to create an individual family coat of arms in a one-to-one setting or a joint family coat of arms in a family setting. The latter is often popular because “family therapists have found that [...], there are inherited myths in many families which are passed on from generation to generation” (Caby/Caby 2017a: 125). For this reason, it can also be useful to combine it with the genogram exercise (cf. *ibid.*). Similarly, guiding principles or sayings may have been repeatedly passed down through the generations, and can be incorporated here, provided they have a positive connotation (→ 7.5), by noting them down at the same time or representing them symbolically.

As an invitation to the exercise, familiar examples can be gathered and categorised. The counsellor can explain the symbols, shapes and forms that are frequently found on family coats of arms, and ask the client which coats of arms generally occur to them. It can also be helpful to point out that a coat of arms is an attempt to embody an identity. Showing the client a few examples may be useful, e.g. the coats of arms of individual cities/towns or football clubs (cf. Campana 2010: 105). The following example shows a possible way of introducing the topic:

“A family coat of arms attempts to express the positive characteristics that hold a family together and make it special. If you think about what your own coat of arms would look like and what it would express, it would undoubtedly be something unique and special. Would you like to create something like that? We may discover something new together or gain a new perspective on you and your family – or be able to give shape to what you already know.”

In order to facilitate the client designing an individual family crest, the counsellor can approach questions such as the colours, shapes, symbols and representations to be used, and their respective meanings for the client. The client can draw the family coat of arms and/or use collage, and cut out and stick on individual symbols and shapes such as buildings or heraldic animals. Counsellors can provide additional craft materials and pictures, or the client may wish to design their coat of arms from their own imagination. Questions to accompany this process might include:

- *“Which colours would you choose for your coat of arms? What do you associate these colours with – what (positive) meaning do they have for you?”*

- *“What does this animal represent for you, personally? Why is it appropriate for your family?”*

- *“How does the symbol you’ve chosen unite your family? What’s positive about the symbol?”*

- *“If your family were here today – who do you think would appreciate and understand your coat of arms, and why? What would be different if you had designed the coat of arms together?”*

- *“Are there any things that you would like to have added that you don’t yet see? What would your perfect coat of arms look like?”*

If the family coat of arms is created in an individual setting, the client may also wish to present it to their family afterwards, and gather any suggestions for additions; the client may then wish to work further on the coat of arms together with their family. However, the client can also keep it for themselves, as a personal and private resource.

If the exercise is carried out in a family setting, the invitation to the exercise can be presented in a similar way, but addressed to all the family members present. In that case, it is helpful if the counsellor allows the clients to talk and create as freely as possible during the exercise, and to only moderate as required, e.g. in the event of conflicts or, after the coat of arms has

been created, to ask about individual meanings, and to focus on resources and convey appreciation. A further option is to divide the family coat of arms into sections of equal size, so that each family member has one section. These sections can then also be filled by all the family – or individually. However, in all cases it is important that family members understand that this is a shared process and a shared coat of arms, and that they discuss together the individual colours, meanings, symbols and shapes to be used.

Faith can move mountains.

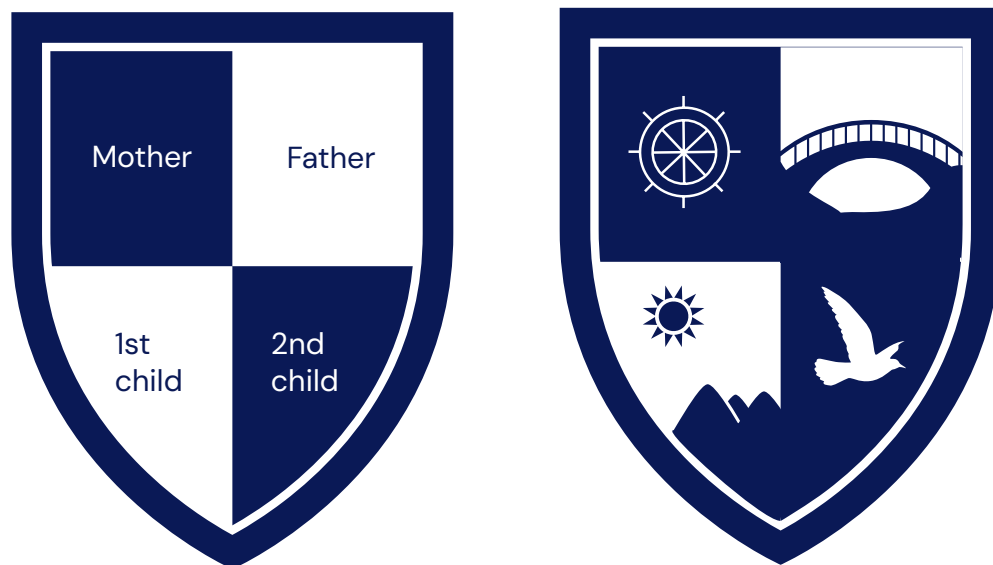


Fig. 14: The family coat of arms: an example

As a powerful symbol and a resource, the family coat of arms can have a marked effect on communication, diversity of perspectives and family cohesion. The unifying elements encourage a focus on the characteristics that hold the family together and define it – for example, it may be important to all family members that they can rely on each other and feel that the family is a safe harbour (e.g. using an anchor as a symbol). At the same time, by adding individual symbols, space and recognition can be created for individual interests. For example, an index client could contribute their own symbol that stands for their religion, and the space explicitly created for this offers the opportunity for the family to integrate this special focus into the overall picture, at least symbolically. This gives space to more than just the focus on the index client's new religion.

This openness and appreciation can open up (new) entry routes – even to people within the family who are considered to be radicalised or affected by radicalisation. Prompts for reflection here might include:

- *“What I see here are many different parts that represent you as individuals, and that help to shape your family and make it special. Is there perhaps a suitable heading for the coat of arms that could describe you as an entire family? Which symbol could accompany it?”*
- *“When I saw how you all created the coat of arms together, I was impressed by how well you all listened to each other and that everyone was able to contribute their part.”*

The family coat of arms is particularly suitable for working with children or young people (cf. Caby/Caby 2017a: 126), who often have an intuitive, creative approach. “The family coat of arms [...] [reflects] both the child's inner life and their perception of the relationship patterns within the family” (Campana 2010: 101). As an introduction to the exercise, the counsellor should first talk to the child or young person about the coat of arms as a symbol, e.g. in stories, books and films. The counsellor can then extend a simple invitation:

“Suppose that you would like to have your own coat of arms later – what would it look like? Which symbols or items would it be particularly important to have on it?” (Caby/Caby 2017a: 126).

In order to have an open and spontaneous attitude towards the child's or young person's ideas, it is advisable not to ask many questions and/or to formulate them as open questions. The counsellor can provide external support only if the child or young person does not have any (more) ideas of their own:

- *“What do you like to do, what are your hobbies?”*
- *“What does your father/mother/brother/sister like to do, what are their hobbies?”*
- *“Is there something that is characteristic of you/your father/your mother/your brother/your sister?”*
- *“Is there something that is characteristic of all of you? What would you call it? Is there a symbol for it?”*

Generally speaking, the counsellor should not evaluate the picture, as it is the meaning of the content that is important here. The counsellor can, however, encourage a client who is unsure about their picture: “Just draw it the way you want to.

That will be fine!” (cf. Campana 2010: 106). Children’s drawings are always highly subjective, which is why the family coat of arms method should primarily be understood as providing a prompt for talking, allowing the counsellor to connect with the child through their drawing (cf. *ibid.*).

Biographical Work

“My son, of all people!”–“My daughter, of all people!” How do people become radicalised? Researchers often look for commonalities between people’s individual biographies. Relatives also ask themselves the same question: was it a crisis event, a loss, the “right” offer at the right time? And, not least, the index client themselves, during the distancing process, also explores how it came about that they, of all people, decided in favour of this ideology or group. Looking at one’s own biography can help in understanding radicalisation processes and finding (new) solutions for distancing processes.

A person’s biography represents their individual life story, which is always subjective: “We create our own image of life as it is lived. We shape this story in such a way that we can live comfortably with it – even if it sometimes doesn’t seem that way at first glance” (Klingenger/Ramsauer 2017: 11). Biographical work is based on the assumption that the individual’s past or life story has an impact on the present and the future, as well as on the individual’s thoughts and actions. Engaging with their own biography in a positive way can have positive effects for a person, such as strengthening their self-confidence or allowing them to draw conclusions about a (higher) meaning from their experiences. Klingenger/Ramsauer (2017: 71) describe the ability to review, manage and shape one’s own biography as a “biographical organisation ability”. That is the core objective of biographical work: “A biography provides a learning setting in which people (on their own, with a counsellor or in a group) can experience healing, life orientation and encouragement. Supporting clients in the broader sense can be oriented more closely to their past history and life situation” (*ibid.*: 61).

Counsellors can use different methods to work with clients on their individual biographies. This approach can be useful for working with index clients, in order to better understand how the radicalisation processes came about and to find possible approaches to achieve deradicalisation. Relatives, such as parents, can also gain a clearer view of their children’s life story and be better able to evaluate their own role in this process and their own position; it can also help them to examine their attitudes and feelings with regard to the underlying story, so that they can generate (new) solutions and gain confidence in

their actions.

Working on one’s own life story can be a very intimate process and is usually accompanied by a broad spectrum of different feelings. Counsellors are therefore advised to only undertake biographical work exercises with the client once a solid relationship of trust has been established.

River of life

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: A length of rope (at least three metres long) or presentation/lining paper, coloured moderation cards, space to lay them out on the floor

Biographies are complex, because many stories, people and feelings are combined in different biographical strands to form a multi-layered life story. When approaching a biography, it is therefore helpful to break it up into stories and episodes, and consider them separately (cf. Klingenger/Ramsauer 2017: 11ff.). The “river of life” is one method for picking out individual key milestones in the biography and reflecting on them in a resource-orientated way. The exercise is based on the work of Peter Nemetschek,³² who, adopting the river of life model and laying out a length of rope as a symbol, used maps and labelling and turned the biography into a real, “traversable” landscape (cf. Kümmelmann 2009: 167).



The river of life and the rope as symbols

It can help the counsellor and the client to open up to a method or exercise, or to a specific topic that is to be worked on using this method, if meaningful symbols and metaphors are used to support deeper understanding. Symbols and metaphors can have different meanings, depending on religion or culture. For this reason, it is particularly useful for the counsellor to take their lead from the client, and openly ask about the things they associate with a particular symbol or metaphor, so that, ideally, those associations can then be used.

The river of life model focusses on the river as a symbol. As they flow, both move forwards – water, like life, moves quickly at times, and at other times more slowly. It runs through wide estuaries or along narrow channels, and is held back by dams and then set in motion again to course and whirl through the

³² Peter Nemetschek is a German family therapist and founder of the Munich School.

rapids. The rope itself is also a useful symbol for more closely examining the course of an individual's life and the separate strands and stages within the biographical work. "If you take a closer look, you will see that a cord also consists of different yarns twisted together [...]. Naturally, these strands are interwoven and overlap each other. Some sections may be very smooth and unremarkable for the most part, while other sections have knots, e.g. in the form of critical disruptions and upheavals" (Klingenger/Ramsauer 2017: 13f.).

For the river of life exercise, the counsellor and client need a room where they have as much space on the floor and as much freedom to move around as possible. The aim is for the client to be able to "pass by" important milestones in their own biography. Using a length of rope (at least three metres long) or other means of representing the river visually (e.g. on lining paper), the client lays out their own life story on the floor, focussing on around five to seven key milestones. The aim is to visualise biographical developments, perceive and appreciate how individual challenges were successfully overcome, discover and activate resources, and explore (new) perspectives and goals. A step-by-step approach is recommended here.³³

1. Preparation

The counsellor lays out a length of rope (at least three metres long) or other material (e.g. a length of lining paper) to represent the river of life, as well as coloured moderation cards (in at least three colours) and pens. The counsellor supports the client during the exercise by writing down the key points on the moderation cards. It is important to regularly reflect these back to the client, to ensure that all the points are recorded correctly.

2. Content focus

At the beginning of the exercise, the focus of the content needs to be defined: what should the exercise be about? Which topic, challenge or wish should be looked at more closely in the exercise? The focus could be on radicalisation or disengagement itself, or on more specific concerns such as the client's goal of reconnecting with their former social environment, finding a job, or a wish for the family to argue less. Counsellors should take the time to formulate a specific topic or area with the client in advance(→ 7.1).

³³ The following steps are based on Kümmelmann (2009) and Caby/Caby (2017a: 123f.), but have been adapted and expanded.

³⁴ There can be a degree of flexibility here: up to nine milestones are possible. However, fewer than three milestones or significantly more than seven is not recommended; following this recommendation keeps the exercise clearer while allowing sufficient resources to be generated.

3. Laying out the river of life: key milestones

The counsellor asks the client to take the rope, which symbolises their life line, and lay it out on the floor (or to draw it on the paper). The rope (or line) represents the time span from the client's birth to the present. The client should leave a small length at the end to indicate the path to the future. Starting at the present, the client is asked to lay out the rope so that it stretches to the beginning (birth) (or to draw the river of life in the form of a line). The client is asked to think of between three and five milestones³⁴ in their life that were particularly significant for them. At least half of these milestones should be positive experiences. Examples might include starting school, completing an apprenticeship, getting married, the birth of a sibling or the client's own child, or perhaps the loss of a close relative, a job change or similar event. When working with index clients or relatives, events such as conversion, departure to or return from abroad, imprisonment or release are often brought up as key turning points. The client themselves is free to decide which milestones they would like included. They should be given sufficient time to lay out the rope (or draw the line) undisturbed. The amount of time required for this varies greatly depending on the client. The client can make adjustments and corrections, and may, during the laying out process, reflect on their life story and important milestones – this is a crucial part of the process. The counsellor should hold back until the client has finished laying out the rope or drawing the line, and only provide support if the client appears uncertain. The counsellor may also, if the client appears doubtful, ask again whether everything should remain as it is or whether something needs to be changed or adjusted. Even though the exercise is primarily designed to encourage clients to reflect on their own life story, it is possible to adapt and modify the exercise to suit the client. For example, parents might also wish to lay out, from their perspective, the path of their child who is at risk of or affected by radicalisation. Professionals, on the other hand, might wish to focus on the stage of life that the child or young person has lived through so far in the context of their particular institution/agency (e.g. school, prison, child and youth welfare centre). The respective labelling would then be amended accordingly.

4. Laying out the base cards

The counsellor writes "Birth", "Present" and "Future" on three moderation cards (of the same colour) and, in consultation with the client, places them on the corresponding points. Another card, possibly of a different colour (the "meta card"), is also placed at a neutral point in the room. This card is intended to offer the opportunity for an external perspective and an exit option. Clients can, at any time during the exercise, move to this position to give themselves some distance or to leave

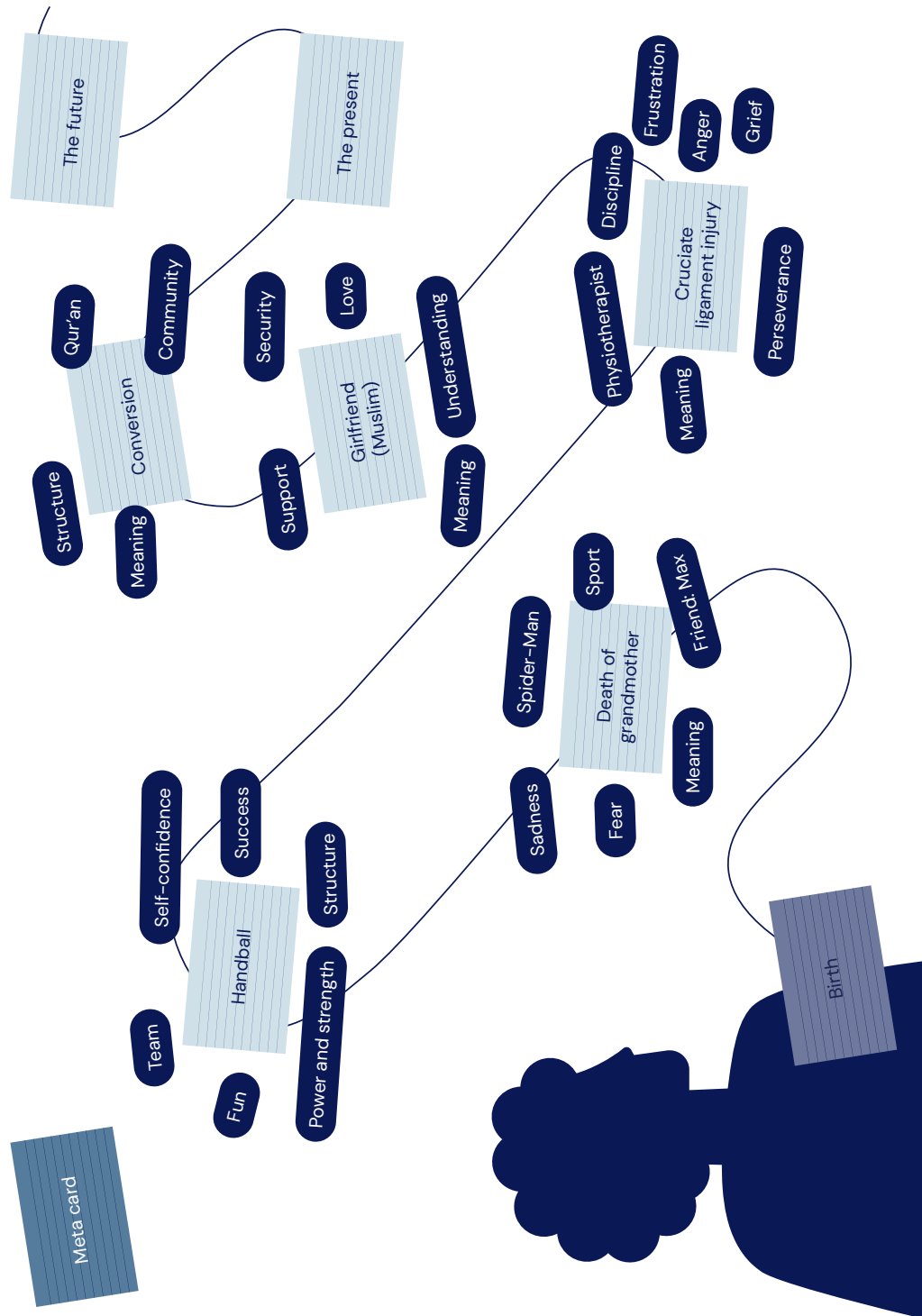


Fig. 15: The river of life model - an example

the river of life (for a short time), if they wish. This external perspective serves both as a place of safety and retreat for the client, and as an opportunity to look at their own life story from the outside. These four cards form the base cards of the exercise, and are then supplemented by the client's individual cards ("milestones", "resources").

5. Naming the milestones

The milestones are now written on moderation cards (of a different colour). The way this works is that the counsellor goes through the milestones with the client, notes them down on the cards in the form of short keywords and then places the cards in the appropriate positions. Objects such as stones, shells or flowers (→ 7.4) can also be used or drawn as symbols for the corresponding milestones. Once again, the client themselves decides which objects are to be selected, how they are to be placed and what they mean. For example, a stone can be associated with coldness and hardness, but also with warmth, smoothness and being pleasant to hold in the hand; a certain flower can take on a different meaning depending on culture, socialisation and the individual's understanding, etc. An inquisitive, open and questioning attitude on the part of the counsellor is therefore very important in order to open up space for reflection on these associations (→ 4.1). Alternatively, the process of naming the milestones can instead take place when the client and counsellor walk the river of life together.

6. Walking the river of life together: reflecting on milestones and identifying resources

The key element of the exercise is to walk together along the client's personal river of life and thus physically and mentally relive, feel and reflect on the key milestones. The counsellor thus supports the client not only in terms of moderating the exercise, but also in a physical sense, by walking alongside them as they walk the path. Starting with the client's birth, the counsellor can initiate the exercise using various questioning techniques, in particular narrative enquiry (→ 6.3). It is crucial to let the client talk about the individual milestones, and to only intervene to the extent necessary for focussing on naming feelings and identifying resources. Even in the case of tragic and sad events, it may still be possible to identify resources.



Dealing with strong emotions

Strong feelings and emotions can sometimes arise during physical exercises, where clients not only talk about important life events, but also move around (→ 7.2). For example, the loss of a close

relative or imprisonment, as a significant emotional experience, may trigger strong feelings of grief and anger (despair). This is natural and is often helpful for the process of reflection and processing. The counsellor can comfort the client and reassure them that they are in a safe space where these feelings can be expressed. In addition, clients have usually learnt how to deal with or overcome their own experiences (turning points), and it is therefore less likely that they will introduce turning points linked to feelings that they cannot tolerate. Nevertheless, as a counsellor, it is useful to point out that, if clients feel uncomfortable or need a separate place to take some deep breaths and compose themselves, the meta card serves as a safe space.

Examples:



- *"What feelings do you associate with this particular event/turning point?"*

- *"How could this particular experience help you with challenges in the future?"*

- *"What gave you the courage and strength to carry on?"*

- *"Who or what helped you?"*

- *"What insights can you take away from this experience?"*

- *"How did you manage to move on from it?"*

There are generally many different resources – special insights, feelings, coping strategies or people – that may have been particularly important during a milestone or the processing of it. Friends or relatives may have helped the client to get through a difficult time, as well as the client's religious faith, prayer, their own guiding principles or convictions, or character and personality traits such as courage or perseverance. The counsellor notes down all the resources discussed on moderation cards (of a different colour) and places them on the floor around the turning points. Optionally, other important key points in relation to the turning points can also be noted on cards; it is recommended that a different colour is used for these.

7. Looking back

Once the counsellor and client have reached the present point in time, the counsellor asks the client to turn around and look from the present back through their own past, and at the

milestones and accumulated resources. The focus is now on appreciating the journey they have made: "How does it feel to look at your history and past from here?" The counsellor can now ask the client to collect up all the resources that they would like to keep and take away with them. Everything else can be left. The resources (cards) that the client gathers up belong to them; they can keep them and refer to them as necessary.

8. Looking to the future

With the collected resources safely in the client's hands, the counsellor and client meet again at the present point, and look together into the future, and at the topic, goal or desire for change defined at the beginning. The counsellor and client reflect together on the extent to which the collected resources might be helpful for the future, and the extent to which the resources could support achievement of the client's goals. Other wishes or goals may need to be added and these can be noted down.

9. The view from the future

As a last step, the counsellor and client have the opportunity to look back at the river of life from the perspective of the future, which is still open, and also to reflect on the accompanying feelings and perceptions. The client can choose a suitable point in the future for this (e.g. three weeks, one year or three years ahead). Possible questions for reflection are:

- *"Imagine you are looking back from the future at this stage of your life: what helped you to achieve your goals?"*

- *"What do your life and everyday routine look like?"*

- *"What is different? What is still the same as it was before?"*

- *"Who or what is important?"*

10. Conclusion

At the end of the exercise, time should be allowed for a successful emotional conclusion, and for the client to also ask any final questions and make any comments. It may also be helpful to take another look at the river of life from the meta position (card). The counsellor can then pack up the remaining cards and the rope, but this should not be done without an appreciative comment from the counsellor and confirmation from the client. For example, the counsellor can ask whether it is okay to collect up the materials now, or whether the client would like to take a photo before this is done. Throughout the exercise, it is important to treat the client's "work" with respect.

The inner child

An individual's identity comprises many different aspects of their personality, each of which is linked to its own set of stories and feelings. Various forms of counselling and therapy incorporate work with these inner facets of the self (for details cf. Peichl 2019: 25ff.). In psychotherapeutic settings which focus on revealing these facets, they are also referred to as "ego states". Childhood and adolescence are particularly formative and significant phases in an individual's life. Stories and feelings that are linked to these phases often have a significant, but also unconscious, influence on later life. If an individual is reminded of conditions, challenges or emergency situations that were significant in childhood or adolescence, they may, as adults, be taken back to that same emotional state. This can sometimes mean that situations cannot be appropriately assessed or dealt with. "These parts of the self and the underlying dimensions of experience are stored in the emotional memory (the limbic system) as survival strategies for emergency situations, and may dominate the spontaneous reaction. In contrast, the cognitive cortex reactions barely have time to take effect; they are simply too slow" (Peichl 2019: 177). The "inner child" that makes itself felt in such moments represents a "childlike state of consciousness" (ibid.: 12).

In index clients, for example, the inner child may seek safety and security in a substitute family, or seek recognition or fulfilment of other types of needs within a new, possibly radical community, as the client may not have (yet) been able to find these in other ways, either in childhood/adolescence or in their adult lives. The anxiety felt by parents who seem unable to cope when the radicalised child seems suddenly inaccessible and unapproachable may stem from aspects of their own inner child; they may lose sight of their skills and be blocked and unable to find solutions. This is sometimes reflected in the idea that the child must be "cured" or "fixed" by the counsellor (*"This just can't be! Make it stop!"*). The inner child is thus a concept that can be used to perceive and consider inner experiences, feelings and memories. By reflecting on the positive and negative memories and feelings stored in the brain, it is possible to acknowledge emotional wounds, and to identify and break through their damaging effects on the individual's thought patterns and behaviours. Similarly, resources that may be present in memories and feelings can be recognised and used. Through loving attention to the inner child and its deliberate separation from the current adult ego, the individual can gain a deeper understanding of their own experiences and the influence of these experiences on their present life. This creates a basis for potential changes. If the memories are particularly painful or traumatic (→ 7.10), it may be helpful to not just reflect on such states of consciousness but also supplement them with self-selected, freely imagined or wished-for memories interposed

by the client.

There are different ways to establish contact with the inner child. Counsellors can carefully incorporate and use this concept in the counselling process. However, because the client's access to their own past may have been neglected for a long time, particularly by adults with strong rationalisation tendencies, the process may initially seem strange to them and require some time to develop. The form the reflection takes can be flexible. It could take place under guidance from the counsellor within the counselling session or the client could carry out the exercises independently outside of the counselling session. They could also, for example, write a sympathetic, loving, affectionate letter to their inner child. It is important that the client wants to understand their inner child, to accept it and all its feelings, to give it an appropriate place in their life and to learn to proactively determine its influence on their current life.

In her audiobook *Dem inneren Kind begegnen* ("Meeting the Inner Child", 2017), Luise Reddemann guides the listener through various exercises in which significant stages of life from birth to adulthood are consciously and reflexively recorded and (re)framed. The listener is enabled to get in touch with their inner child by means of a panoramic journey. Two of these exercises, "Collecting moments of happiness" and "Identifying the childhood background to adult problems", are included here as examples of exercises to use in work with index clients and their relatives. As with all exercises, the counsellor should feel comfortable and confident with exercises such as these that use the imagination, as they require a certain degree of approachability and openness on the part of the counsellor. Self-awareness can support this. Although these exercises are suitable as introductory exercises, they do not constitute in-depth hypnoanalytic work in the psychoanalytical sense. The counsellor can consider and use them as a stimulus when working with the concept of the inner child, and test how useful they are for supporting the client to find helpful insights and resources. However, if the counsellor suspects or knows that there has been trauma in the client's life, or senses a strong resistance in themselves or the client, they should refrain from using such exercises.

Work with the concept of the inner child can be carried out in different ways. As an alternative to the specific imagination exercise, the concept may also, depending on the counsellor and client, be incorporated and used in a low-threshold way, e.g. in the form of questions:

- "If you think back to when you were a child or teenager, what does the current situation and this feeling remind you of? Have you ever felt this powerless before? What was that like?"
.....
- "Who or what helped you then? What did you learn from it?"
.....

- *“Imagine that there’s a part of you inside that remembers what it was like for you as a child or teenager. What does this inner part still need from you now?”*
- *“What would your inner child say that it needs from you now? What does it need from other people?”*

Collecting moments of happiness

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Short exercise 

Materials: ---

The counsellor explains the concept of the inner child to the client as simply as possible, and the benefits it offers in regard to current challenges and potential for change. The client is then invited to take part in an exercise involving the imagination. It is important that an undisturbed and comfortable setting is selected, where the client can feel relaxed. The exact form of language used for the invitation to the exercise and the exercise itself can and should be adapted to fit the setting, the counsellor and the client. An example is:

“I’d like to invite you to do a brief exercise that is aimed at your memories of your childhood and adolescence – the inner child or inner adolescent in you, as it were. It’s as if you can picture a part of you that has stored all the important memories and feelings you had as a child and teenager. In some situations, these may still be relevant to your experiences now. With the help of the exercise, we can get closer to the positive experiences, and perhaps also the negative ones. This may help you to understand yourself better and to get a better idea of why you feel and act the way you do in certain situations (such as the situation you have described ...). Once you have a better understanding of yourself and your actions and feelings, you may be able to treat yourself more sympathetically. And, in the best-case scenario, you may also be able to make changes more easily, should you want to do so.”

In order to guide the client to connect with their own life story and inner child, the counsellor guides the client through the exercise using instructions, speaking as calmly and slowly as possible:

“Make yourself comfortable and take time to feel the contact between your body and the floor. Feel your feet firmly on the floor or the surface you’re lying on. Imagine that your childhood and adolescence form a panoramic film that you can watch. It’s

showing in front of your inner eye and starts with your birth. Now imagine that you have a spotlight which you can use to highlight all the happy moments of your childhood and adolescence, big and small. They stand out clearly and are brightly illuminated. Take a moment to look at some of these meaningful moments of happiness. If there were none or very few back then, you can make some up now. [Pause] Every moment of happiness glows and shines. Consciously go back to the moment of your creation. Your parents or some other power wants you to live, just you. This moment shines particularly brightly. Let all the bright moments of happiness sink in. Now imagine that you have a container in which you can store this ‘happiness energy’. This can be any suitable container you wish – perhaps a special tin, box, jar or something similar. Then imagine that you can pour your happiness energy out wherever you want. Your life is waiting to become happier. If this brings you joy, you can take a moment to feel gratitude for all your moments of happiness. This will increase your sense of happiness. [Pause] We have now come to the end of the exercise. Now feel the effect of this exercise on yourself. Become aware of the contact between your body and the floor or surface you are on. Remind yourself of your age now, and where you are.”

Identifying the childhood background to adult problems

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Short exercise 

Materials: ---

For a deeper look at the inner child, the counsellor can use the following imagination exercise to help the client to identify which of the current challenges they are facing are being influenced or determined by their childhood background. Following this realisation, it may be possible for the client to strengthen their ability to act and change at the level of thought:

“Make yourself comfortable and take time to feel the contact between your body and the floor. Now please name a situation from your everyday life that is causing you problems. Please take relatively minor problems for the first few times you do this, and then perhaps more serious ones later on. Take a moment to think about the first thing that comes into your mind. [Pause] Now check with yourself whether you may be exacerbating the problem by not dealing with it in an entirely adult manner. And then imagine how you would solve the problem as a competent adult. Ask yourself what you might be doing that gets in your own way. What should you actually be able to do, that you’re not yet able to? Realise that there are reasons why you’re not

able to do what you want to do. Now check whether there is something childlike in you that wants something different from you, the adult. How old is this inner child? Imagine that they are now in the room with you and visualise them as accurately as possible. What do they look like? What are they wearing? Can you identify what they're feeling? What does this child need? Please ask your inner child what they need from you. If the child is too young to talk, you will be able to identify what they need in a different way, because you can sense what this child feels. Everyone in need requires empathy, including your inner child. Imagine that you are now sharing the child's feelings and fully recognise their pain. Your child has a right to all their feelings. Let them know that you understand them and love them just as they are. The child can be just the way they are. Does your child perhaps want physical contact? Physical contact is beneficial for almost everyone. If your child would like physical contact, please give them some now. When the child has calmed down, you can tell them what time you are in now, and that a long period has passed since they felt this distress. And that the period in question is now in the past. Then invite your inner child to join you in your time. Show them how many good things there are in the present. Take the child to a wonderful place where they will feel at home, and where they will be able to stay from now on. Provide them with everything they need so that they are happy to stay in this new place: Playmates and caring people who are only there for this child. It might also be best for your inner child if you imagine loving parents for it. Find whatever is most appropriate for your inner child. When your child is well provided for, you can say goodbye to them. Make a firm commitment to visit them at least once a day for the next two weeks. [Pause] And now – please check in with yourself and feel the effect this exercise has had on you. Become aware of your body's contact with the floor, and remind yourself of your current age and where you are."

Tidying up and updating the guiding principles³⁵

Target groups: Index clients 

Time frame: Longer exercise 

Materials: Coloured moderation cards, pens, pinboard or magnetic board

Most people grow up with specific guiding principles that accompany them from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood, and influence them in different ways. These guiding principles often have an unconscious effect on the individual, and are linked to specific roles that they assume or do not assume in the systems in which they interact. Guiding principles can be exhortations to the person that have been repeatedly seized

³⁵The exercise is taken from Potreck-Rose/Jacob (2021: 174ff.) and has been adapted and expanded here.

upon and communicated or implicitly conveyed, or that take the form of proverbs repeated by parents, for example. Guiding principles can also be found in radical or extremist ideologies and communities, and often have a significant influence on clients' lives. For example, Salafism is dominated by the guiding principle of "mandating the good and forbidding the bad", representing a dualistic worldview in which there are no shades of grey. In some cases, clients may not even be aware of the extent to which radical ideological interpretations reflect the same guiding principles present in their childhood, or represent a contradiction of them which the client may have intentionally sought out. For example, certain gender role models (→ 7.12) and guiding principles from childhood may play a decisive role in determining why and how clients turn, or have turned in the past, to certain ideological ideas. Girls who in childhood were encouraged to be wary of the world and cautious, and who may have been prohibited from doing many things ("Be a good girl") while their brothers enjoyed more freedoms, may find this same ideal reflected in Islamist ideologies. Or they may be seeking gender equality ("All are equal before God") and discover for the first time that boys are also expected to renounce things (e.g. abstaining from sex before marriage), which they welcome as being more equitable. Ultimately, guiding principles are "all (behavioural) instructions, orders or rules of conduct and behaviour that important attachment figures use or that correspond to the norms of the social reference group" (Potreck-Rose/Jacob 2021: 174). Reflecting on these guiding principles can be key in distancing and exit counselling, and for clients who have grown up in radical ideological contexts.



Examples:

- *Be a respectable/good/kind/hardworking/brave/... boy/girl!*
- *You should be brave/honest/strong/... !*
- *You mustn't lie/be loud/be demanding/... !*
- *Take care of your brother/sister!*
- *You can do anything!*
- *You're fine just the way you are!*
- *Work before pleasure!*
- *No pain, no gain!*
- *Better late than never!*
- *Boys don't cry!*

- *Life's not supposed to be a bed of roses.*
- *They're no better than anyone else!*

The "Tidying up and updating guiding principles" exercise is about helping the client to recall and be aware of these guiding principles, so that they can sort through them and update and add to them, as necessary. This form of differentiated biographical reorientation provides helpful steps towards self-acceptance (cf. Potreck-Rose/Jacob 2021: 171ff.) and activates resources. The focus here should be on guiding principles that empower the client (cf. also Röhrbein 2019: 89f.).

1. Stating and attributing guiding principles

The first step for the client is to gather guiding principles that were or are formative in childhood, adolescence and adulthood (depending on the client's age), and note them down on index cards. These notes can take the form of guiding principles, sayings/proverbs, messages or personality descriptions. In addition, the exercise requires that the request implicit in each be noted down (e.g. "Mandate the good and forbid the bad" → "Stick to the stated rules! Don't ask questions!" or "You'll go far if you try hard enough" → "You can do it! You should make more effort!"). The associated patterns of rewards and punishments can also be noted. Hell as a threatening punishment may play a relevant role here for highly ideologised clients and often requires specific examination (→ 7.7). Attaching the index cards to a pinboard or magnetic board allows them to be used to create a table to show an overview (see below: use different colours for people, time periods, guiding principles and rewards/punishments):

It is important to give a detailed explanation when introducing the exercise. The client can also be given examples as an illustration and for inspiration.

Person	Guiding principles	Rewards	Punishments
Childhood			
Mother			
Father			
Brother			
Sister			
...			
Adolescence			
Friend			
Clique			
Teacher			
Sports club			
...			
(Early) adulthood			
Spouse/partner			
Community/ brothers/sisters			
Colleague			
...			

Table 3: Stating guiding principles



Example:

Guiding principle: *No pain, no gain!* (e.g. father/mother)

Message: *Work hard!*

Reward: *If you work hard, I'll be proud of you/you'll get a bike.*

Punishment: *If you don't work hard, I'll be disappointed in you/you won't get a bike.*

The exercise should comprise the people or attachment groups that have played or are playing an important role in the client's life. The guiding principles can be compiled in the counselling session. However, it is often useful for the client to take the list with them and continue filling it out at home. How comprehensive or extensive the list becomes depends on the client.

2. Marking and checking valid guiding principles

The second step is to highlight the guiding principles that are still significant or valid today. The client is then asked to check the extent to which the guiding principles recorded are applied in their everyday life. In the time leading up to the next session, the client should carefully observe the situations in which these guiding principles, or any other guiding principles that have not yet been recorded, play a part. This requires a high level of self-motivation on the part of the client to continue working independently outside the actual counselling session. The client can make brief notes on the following questions in a short report:

- Which guiding principle or principles currently determine my actions, thinking and mood?
- Are these already on the list?
- Are there any other guiding principles that I notice in everyday life (e.g. within the community, family, at work or with friends) that I can add?

The comparison can provide a basis for discussion at the next meeting or for several meetings. When working with index clients, the guiding principles from childhood may be reflected in the current focus on (newly discovered) religion or run contrary to it. Coming to terms with this is a core part of the exercise and may be accompanied by various feelings, such as anger, sadness, surprise, gratitude or indignation. It is therefore vital to recognise these feelings, give them space and, if necessary, link other exercises to this reflection (→ 7.2).

Date	Guiding principle	From whom?	In what situation?	Remarks

Table 4: Reflecting on guiding principles

3. Tidying up the guiding principles

In the third step, the guiding principles are sorted and reviewed, i.e. "tidied up", in response to reflection questions such as:

- "Which guiding principles are right for you?"
- "Which guiding principles do you agree with?"
- "Which guiding principles help you to deal with your life?"
- "Which guiding principles hinder or trouble you?"
- "Which guiding principles are preventing you from achieving your goals?"
- "Which guiding principles would you like to let go of?"

Once the guiding principles have been clearly pinned to a pinboard or magnetic board, the client can now step up to the board and take action themselves by sorting out the guiding principles they want to let go of. This can sometimes lead to the client taking initial decisive steps towards disengagement by, for example, breaking down individual aspects of an Islamist ideology in the form of its guiding principles, scrutinising them and subsequently rejecting them.

4. Updating the guiding principles

The next step focusses on the client updating their own guiding principles. The counsellor now asks the client to draw up new guiding principles for their own life. To avoid undue complexity, it is advisable to limit these to around seven. In contrast to the passive guiding principles ("should") which have until now influenced the client's life, the client should actively determine their own guiding principles ("want"). As a helpful suggestion, the counsellor can recommend starting the sentences with "I want to ...", "I'm allowed to ..." or "I no longer want to ...". It is also helpful to use more moderate or negative formulations to complete

the sentences, e.g. “I’m allowed to be slow/trust myself” or “I don’t want to have to consider my younger siblings’ feelings all the time/make myself small”. The resulting sentences are again written on index cards.

My guiding principles
1. I want to ...
2. I want to ...
3. I want to ...
4. I’m allowed to ...
5. I’m allowed to ...
6. I no longer want to ...
7. I no longer want to ...

Table 5: Stating new guiding principles

The new guiding principles can then be discussed and reviewed with the client:

- “What does this guiding principle mean to you?”
- “What changes should the guiding principle help you to make in your life?”
- “How will you be able to tell whether the guiding principle is having an effect? Who else would notice that?”
- “What are the resultant goals from the guiding principles that have been formulated?”

The guiding principles are naturally understood to be flexible. Over the course of the counselling work, some of the guiding principles designated as formative may come up several times, and become relevant. The client’s self-defined guiding principles can also be adapted, corrected and supplemented. It is helpful, as the counselling work progresses, to reflect on how the guiding principles are working or no longer working in the client’s everyday life, and on their significance and how the client can evaluate this. It may be useful to develop specific ideas or measures together as to how and where the new guiding principles might or should make themselves felt in everyday life.

Life book

Target groups: Index clients (children) 

Time frame: Longer exercise 

Materials: Blank notebook, if necessary

When working with younger (index) clients, or with children and young people in general, it can be useful to work on their life story, and honour and record it, by creating a “life book”. Many (index) clients do not (or no longer) live with their birth parents, but rather with relatives or in foster/residential care. This is often the case when the parents have been deprived of custody or right of residence (e.g. due to circumstances that jeopardise the child’s welfare, such as addiction or violence) or when one parent has died or been imprisoned (this is often the case for returnees, for example). The life book is a helpful way of addressing and appreciating different stages of life, changes and sets of circumstances, and reflecting on them together during counselling.

For this exercise, the counsellor invites the client to create a book with them, in which they can write about who the client is, what makes them special and what their experiences have been to date. The book can also include a special focus on a specific topic, e.g. the client’s religious faith or spirituality, and this can run through all the chapters. This content can later be incorporated into the counselling process and addressed in a very personal way. The counsellor may get the client to choose a (blank) shop-bought life book that particularly appeals to them, or the client may wish to make one themselves. Once this step has been completed, the counsellor then gives the client a question catalogue that serves as a guide for the creation of the life book, setting out the headings of the various chapters. This guide can be adapted and expanded by the counsellor and client during the creation of the life book. The method of presentation is also flexible – clients can write in their entries, and also include photos, drawings, etc. Ansgar Röhrbein (2019: 107f.) proposes the following structure, which has been slightly modified here:

1. This is me.
2. This is my (birth) family. This is my mother/These are my mothers. This is my father/These are my fathers. Here are some of my mum and dad’s favourite things ...
3. This is my new home (my/our room, my bed, etc.) ...
4. Where am I right now? What’s going on in my head, my heart and my gut? Who or what gives me support?

5. This is where I was born (hospital, home, first places, etc.) ...
6. The country/countries where I/my parents come from ...
7. The previous stops along my journey (on the map) ...
8. Important companions (who stood by me or supported me) ...
9. Wonderful experiences in my childhood ...
10. Small mementos that are important to me (e.g. cuddly toys/stuffed animals, toys, symbols) ...
11. Places I definitely want to visit (again) ...
12. Music and songs that I associate with good feelings or that help me to grieve ...
13. Favourite books and stories (that have been read to me or I have read myself) ...
14. Helpful sayings that have done me good and are still doing me good (e.g. the words of person XY ...) ...
15. My strengths and abilities (that others have given me; I have ..., I am ..., I can ...) ...
16. My little treasure chest (things I want to keep and have with me for the rest of my life) ...
17. When I think of ..., I am happy that .../I miss .../I'd like to know ...
18. My thoughts for the future ...

With the help of various discussion and questioning techniques (→ 6.3), the client can appreciate and reflect upon the book content that has been created. If necessary, the exercise can be used as a process to accompany the counselling over several sessions, and the book can be continued and gradually filled in at home. The client should decide for themselves when they feel comfortable and safe to create the book, and how they want to do it. It can also be agreed that the entire book, or specific pages, are to be kept private, for the client's eyes only. This is particularly useful if the client wants to add their private thoughts that they do not want to share. In addition to presenting the client themselves, and their family and life story, the life book is ultimately also about reflecting on the associated feelings (cf. Röhrbein 2019: 105f.).

Resource balance sheet

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise, "homework" assignment 

Materials: Template (→ 12.5)

Clients whose outlook is dominated by current problems and challenges in the context of (imminent) radicalisation often do not recognise existing resources, or cannot access them. The family then tends to become a place of crisis and conflict, where many things are categorised critically and negatively. For young people at risk of radicalisation, parents tend to be perceived as people who do not want to understand and accept them. For the parents, on the other hand, their teenage child seems to turn into an unapproachable rebel, threatening to dive headlong down a slippery slope and completely split off from the family. Using a pre-prepared resource balance sheet, the client can focus on and uncover existing resources from the family's shared history, the family system and individual personalities. This helps to broaden and improve the client's view of the family, bringing them closer together (again) and creating a basis for more positive communication. The resources uncovered here can draw attention to core competences and feelings that can potentially help in addressing the familial relationships and the client's own position within the family in a positive way.

One way of implementing this exercise is for counsellors to give the client the resource balance sheet (→ 12.5) to take home with them, and then discuss it with them in the following session. The client can also complete the form during the counselling session. This may be helpful if the client finds it difficult to answer some of the questions, and needs to be guided by the counsellor and asked pertinent questions. The balance sheet can be used in individual settings with index clients and also in a family setting. The latter offers the opportunity to mirror the results directly to the other family members, perhaps surprise them and engage them in further discussion.

Collages and pictures

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Various objects (treasure chest), picture cards or postcards

“Symbols serve to represent the invisible with the visible” (Bendetti/Rauchfleisch 1988, cited in Röhrbein 2019: 74).

At the start of a counselling session, or when dealing with very emotional issues or moments in their life story, the client may experience a certain amount of tension. They can find communicating and discussing their different feelings directly and openly overwhelming. In this scenario, it often helps the client to use pictures or objects to make their thoughts, wishes and feelings tangible, and so create a distance for themselves from their own story and feelings. If, for example, a symbol in the form of an object or picture is chosen to represent a thought, topic or feeling, this can be put away or the client can physically distance themselves from it within the room, e.g. by taking a few steps away from it. Moreover, talking about topics, thoughts, wishes or feelings can be easier if the client first talks about pictures, objects or symbols, even if they are also talking about themselves at the same time (cf. Röhrbein 2019: 71). It is also then the client’s decision as to what they wish to disclose and what they (still) wish to keep private (cf. *ibid.*). Another advantage is that a picture speaks not only to the conscious levels of experience and behaviour based on attitudes and motives, but also the unconscious ones (cf. *ibid.*).

For example, the counsellor can provide a specially prepared “treasure chest” containing small objects (→ 7.4), from which the client can select suitable objects or symbols. Postcards or laminated pictures are also suitable. If outreach counselling takes place at the client’s home, objects in the room that may already have meaning for the client can also be used. In order to activate resources, the counsellor can ask, for example, about highlights (cf. Röhrbein 2019: 73) in the client’s life to date, or about milestones with positive connotations that are important for the client:

- *“I would like to invite you to choose up to three of the cards/pictures/objects here that symbolise an important and positive highlight in your life.”*
- *“What perfect moment does this symbol represent?”*
- *“What pleasant memories does this symbol bring to mind?”*
- *“What were your feelings when you chose this picture/object?”*
- *“Which colour corresponds to those feelings?”*

Narrative enquiry is particularly useful in biographical reappraisal:

- *“Please describe in detail what makes the moment you chose so special ...”*

- *“Who was present?”*
- *“What were the circumstances and general environment?”*
- *“What sounds, smells and tastes are part of this memory?”*
- *“What else do you remember?”*
- *“What was the most energising/beautiful/... aspect of this special moment?”*

The counsellor can also make inferences from the symbols in order to bring the resources that they yield into the current context.

- *“If you look at the symbol again, what benevolent/loving message does it have?”*
- *“Suppose you want to integrate part of this message more strongly into your everyday life in the present, and use your symbol as a small reminder of it – where would be a good place for it in your home? How might it be able to support you?”*

Dealing with Discrimination

Prejudices are based on the attribution of characteristics that determine the perception of and behaviour towards people (or groups of people), and are often fed by stereotyped descriptions. They elude analytical and reflective observation and are activated automatically. Although there are also positively connoted stereotypes about certain groups, it is mainly derogatory stereotypes that are societally relevant and lead to prejudice. These can have a constitutive effect for stereotypes of “an enemy” that are instrumentalised in political ideologies. Prejudice is thus the root of hostile actions that lead to individual and structural discrimination (cf. Benz 2020: 43ff.).

Anti-discrimination is enshrined in law at several levels. Probably the best known is the German General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG), which is intended to protect against discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, age,

disability, religious belief and ethnicity in relation to access to paid work, services and housing. Anti-discrimination is also dealt with in Article 3 (3) of the German Basic Law,³⁶ which prohibits discrimination based on religion, origin, gender and age, as well as racial discrimination. Similar clauses are also contained in the Preamble and Article 2 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights³⁷ and in Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (cf. BMFSFJ 2022: 12), both of which were signed by Germany.

Nevertheless, racial discrimination is still experienced by people at an individual and structural level. Racism is often only linked to proponents of far-right ideologies, but it can be unconsciously reproduced by everyone, because we are all socialised in a racist system. The concept of “Othering”, from post-colonial theory, which describes the process of making some people “Others” and distancing oneself from groups marked as different to one’s own, is useful here. Othering attaches greater value to the in-group and devalues the (constructed) “Others”, who, according to this logic, cannot be part of the “us”. This is usually justified by supposed cultural differences and plays a key role in the functioning of anti-Muslim racism (cf. Bozay 2017: 223).

Visible characteristics in outward appearance are particularly associated with experiences of discrimination. Muslim women in particular who wear headscarves or cover themselves in other ways stand out and are therefore labelled as “different”. Forty-eight per cent of people whose appearance reveals a visible migration history in their family experience discrimination, compared to only 17 per cent of people whose appearance does not (cf. Madubuko 2021: 31). On an individual level, this can manifest itself in constant questions about a person’s origin or in surprised comments about their language skills. There is also frequently a process of exoticisation in which people are ascribed apparently positive characteristics that are, however, based on racist prejudices, such as the claim that all Black³⁸ people are good dancers.

At a societal level, discrimination has far-reaching consequences, particularly at school and in relation to housing and employment. There are now numerous studies that show that people with a supposedly “migrant” name and certain phenotypical characteristics in their appearance are much less likely to be invited to job interviews. If the person is suspected to be Muslim, the likelihood is even lower. The situation is similar on the housing market. Studies have shown that people with a surname interpreted as Arabic or Turkish are less likely to receive a positive response after viewing a house or flat (cf. Gold et al. 2021: 42ff.).

Discrimination is therefore embedded in our societal structures and has developed throughout history. An anti-discrimination education approach recognises, critiques and works to abolish these structures. Within this framework, not

³⁶ For the exact wording, see https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/gg/art_3.html (as at 4 April 2023).

³⁷ See <https://www.un.org/depts/german/menschenrechte/aemr.pdf> (as at 4 April 2023).

³⁸ This has an initial capital letter as it is a political self-designation. The term has its origins in resistance struggles and is part of processes of empowerment. It does not refer to actual skin colour, but to societal position and associated experiences of racism (cf. Madubuko 2021: 29f.).

³⁹ “White” is capitalised in this context, as it does not refer to skin colour, but to the social construct and social positioning that is described. In virtue of this positioning, White people are not subjects of racial discrimination.

only are the experiences of those affected by discrimination examined, but also the privileges and associated responsibilities of those not affected by it. An intersectional perspective is adopted that recognises the different forms of discrimination and the points at which they interconnect.

Anti-discrimination in educational practice should not be viewed as a specialised topic, as discrimination is a daily occurrence in all areas of life and learning. It must be seen as a basic mindset, the aim of which is to think and act in a discrimination-conscious manner (cf. Pates et al. 2010: 101ff.). This is particularly important when professionals work with clients who have experienced discrimination, which may include the issue of religiously motivated extremism.

For a long time, intercultural approaches dominated education and social work, and are still very popular today. They are based on the assumption that misunderstandings when representatives of different cultures come into contact can be avoided through culture-specific knowledge. Inherent in this perspective is a concept of culture that assumes a strong internal homogeneity and an external demarcation from other cultures. These differences are often defined from a paternalistic perspective and stated very specifically (cf. Oberzaucher-Tölke 2018: 658f.). In this case, too, an “Othering” takes place that turns the supposed “Others” into a problem, and neglects reflection on one’s own position in society.

To develop an anti-discriminatory mindset, it is particularly important to become aware of one’s own privileges, the way they are embedded in society and their historical development. Through this reflection, it is possible to recognise one’s own societal positioning and how it impacts one’s thoughts and actions. This can sometimes lead to a defensive attitude, as one’s own (unconscious) prejudices and discriminatory attitudes are revealed (cf. Pates et al. 2010: 105). “White” professionals³⁹ in particular need to critically analyse their own privilege. As an interdisciplinary field of study, critical whiteness theory (CWT) deals with theoretical and practical approaches to the critique of racism, with the aim of critically examining and revealing the connection between “White” norms and privileges and racist discrimination. Individuals may experience feelings of guilt and shame (→ 7.9) when dealing with this, but these must be overcome in order to initiate constructive change processes (cf. Marmer 2018: 297f.).

Gold et al. (2021: 131ff.) suggests working with the “inner team” method (→ 7.11), so that “White” professionals can reflect on themselves in a way that is critical of racism and power. This can also reveal aspects that can be traced back to racist socialisation, or through which people cling to their own privileges and the power that goes with them. However, recognising these aspects is important in order to be able to reposition them, deal constructively with feelings of guilt and shame, and take responsibility for one’s own thoughts and actions. It can be

challenging to identify those parts of oneself that have so far escaped debate and that one therefore does not want to see, as well as those that prevent critical reflection on one's own societal positioning.

For those affected by discrimination, (self-)empowerment can be an important societal response to experiences of discrimination. Depending on knowledge acquired from biographical experiences, it should be part of lifeworld-orientated and anti-discriminatory educational practice to integrate empowerment, either in the form of safe spaces or as an attitude at work. Empowerment in "safe spaces" may be led primarily by appropriate trainers or professionals with a corresponding biographical approach. This represents a special resource for creating a space in which people with similar experiences of discrimination can find understanding and a sense of belonging without the presence of people from the majority society, if that is their wish. Shared experiences often have both an empowering and an unburdening effect and offer potential for change (cf. Madubuko 2021: 125, 131f.).

Practitioners who are not affected by the forms of discrimination described cannot lead a safe space themselves, as this would remove the basic safety aspect. Nevertheless, it is possible to adopt empowerment-oriented behaviour. This includes an anti-discriminatory mindset and a willingness to engage in further training and self-reflection. Framework conditions can be created in which clients can be offered safe spaces by the provision of a trainer and a designated space. Furthermore, this must also be reflected at an institutional level, for example by promoting diversity in the team and examining work materials for discrimination and representation issues (cf. Madubuko 2021: 148ff.).

Power flower⁴⁰

Target groups: Professionals 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper/template (→ 12.6), coloured pens

Power dimensions within society also have an impact on (educational) work with clients at an institutional level. When working with clients who experience discrimination across several different dimensions, it is essential that professionals examine their own social positioning and associated privileges. This can reveal the features linked to the exercise of power or experiences of powerlessness, and how inclusion or exclusion processes operate.

With the help of the "power flower", the individual's own positioning can be made clear. Counsellors can carry out this exercise as part of self-reflection and further development of an

⁴⁰The method is based on the exercise from Europahaus Aurich and Anti-Bias-Werkstatt's method box "Learning Democracy and Anti-Bias Work", and has been adapted for the counselling context.

anti-discriminatory mindset, or together as a team in order to discuss the different layers of privilege within the team. In this way, a power-critical perspective is adopted at an institutional level. This method can also be used in counselling processes with professionals in order to raise awareness of the power dynamics between professionals and the index client. It is also possible to broaden one's understanding of the extent to which socially and institutionally experienced discrimination has an influence on the radicalisation process, and how this can be counteracted.

The template (see Fig. 16) contains some relevant group categories that contribute to discrimination. There is also space for adding further categories with which people identify. The next step is to identify the categories in which privileges exist and the categories in which discrimination is experienced. If the client does not feel discriminated against and excluded from society because of the affiliation, the inner petal of the corresponding affiliation is coloured in. If there is discrimination and exclusion, the outer petal is coloured in.

After completing the flower, the following reflection questions can be asked:

- *"What feelings arose during the process? Where did they appear?"*
- *"How does it feel to see my own privileges coloured in?"*
- *"Which of the affiliations/petals guide my thoughts/actions in particular?"*
- *"How has the flower changed over the course of my life? What will it look like in five years' time? Where do I see scope for action?"*
- *"Which of these affiliations have an impact on my professional behaviour?"*
- *"How can my own privileges be used positively?"*
- *"How do I relate to my clients in each position? What power mechanisms are at work here and how can they be dealt with critically?"*

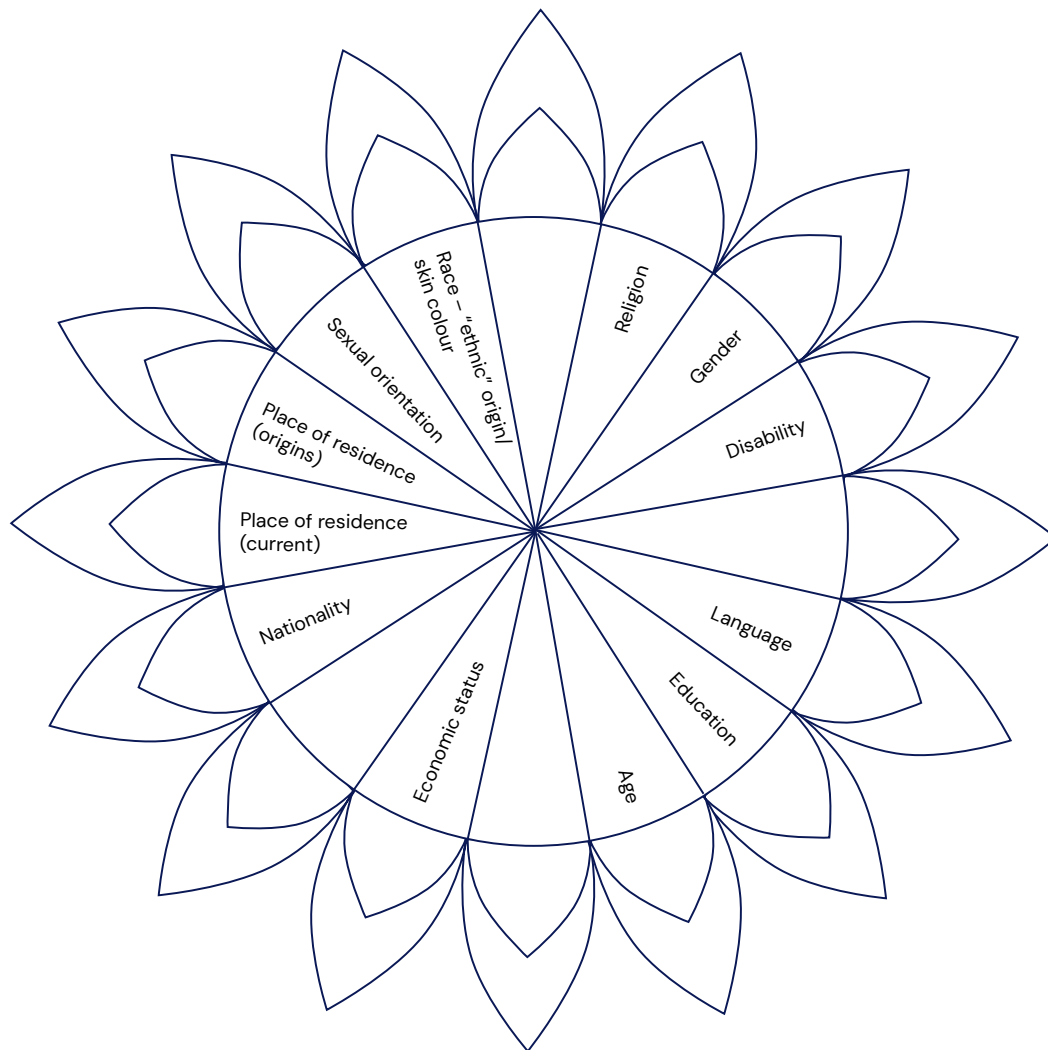


Fig. 16: Sample template for a power flower

To make potential hierarchies apparent, the petals can also be shaded in using a second colour, or representative objects can be placed on them, based on the client's experiences. By using circular questions (→ 6.3), it is also possible to include the client's perspective on the power differences.

In the course of this exercise, the extent to which these differences are manifested in experiences of discrimination can be shown. Often, index clients are only perceived as being radical, but radicalisation never takes place in a vacuum. This exercise can, for example, reveal the potential significance of anti-Muslim racism, misogyny or other forms of inequality in the radicalisation of young people. Experiences of discrimination may not be merely the trigger for this process, but can also perpetuate and even reinforce it. Islamist figures deliberately refer to anti-Muslim racism in their propaganda when they attempt to create approaches that tap into young people's lived experiences. In order to disrupt this cycle, professionals can reflect on how they and their institution contribute to index clients' experiences of discrimination and how it might be possible to take responsibility for this.

Identity molecule

Target groups:	Index clients, relatives 
Time frame:	Session exercise 
Materials:	Circular moderation cards in various colours and sizes, pens

According to social psychologist and identity researcher Heiner Keupp, the term "identity" can be used to summarise all the aspects of an individual that characterise them. It arises during social construction, in an interplay between the parts of our subjective inner self and our cultural and social localisation, and forms the basis for inner balance. However, identity is not a rigid construct, but rather the result of reflexive processes, and therefore adapts to the respective biographical challenges over the course of the individual's lifetime. It does not occur randomly, but is dependent on individual resources, social integration and the social and institutional structures and conditions in which the individual operates. The aim of everyday identity work is to bring together the partial aspects of our identity in such a way that a coherent overall picture emerges and we are able to act competently (cf. Keupp 2000).

In the "identity molecule" method, clients are supported in working out the partial aspects of their identity and thus consciously dealing with them. Circular moderation cards in different colours and sizes should be provided for this purpose. At the beginning, the client should take a card and write their name on it. This is placed in the centre of the

table or floor or attached to a whiteboard. The counsellor and client now work together to identify the different aspects of the client's identity, and the client also writes these on the cards. These can be affiliations to groups, hobbies, interests or characteristics. The counsellor supports this process as necessary by asking the client about significant affiliations or by giving examples of their own affiliations, so as to give the client an idea of potential areas for consideration. The moderation cards with the aspects written on are gradually arranged around the client's name card, and can be clustered thematically. Once the client has finished their "identity molecule", they evaluate the result and explore the feelings that have arisen during the process. The client may experience overwhelming emotions such as powerlessness, sadness or anger in relation to aspects of their identity that are associated with experiences of discrimination (→ 7.2), and these must be treated with respect.

The following are examples of questions that might be asked to prompt further reflection:

- *"How do the different aspects feel to you? Which ones are pleasant, and which ones cause difficulties for you?"*
- *"Which affiliations/aspects did you immediately think of and which did you have to think about for longer? How do they differ?"*
- *"Which of the aspects/affiliations did you choose, which are innate and which have other people ascribed to you? What difference does it make?"*
- *"What do the different aspects/affiliations mean to you? Which are particularly significant for you, and which are not?"*
- *"When have the different aspects changed and why? Which aspects are likely to change in the future?"*

Using this method, clients can not only reflect on the differences between how they perceive themselves and how others perceive them, but also recognise that their identity is multi-layered and mutable. There are categories that (probably) will not change throughout life, such as gender and ethnicity, and which may be linked to experiences of discrimination. The method is not intended to ignore these categories, but clients should also be given the opportunity to look at and devote time to the aspects of their identity that may hold resources and have the potential to be empowering.

This method can also be used in the counselling of relatives, who could compile an identity molecule for the index client. Doing so can facilitate a change in the relatives' perspective,



Fig. 17: Index client identity molecule - example

particularly if they only perceive the index client as a radicalised individual. They may realise that there are also many other, sometimes more familiar parts of the index client's identity. This can lead to them finding common ground with the index client and new topics for discussion, which may strengthen the relationship again. In addition, the identity molecule can also be used to gain potential impetus for distancing by, for example, bringing to light hobbies and interests that have been pushed into the background, and giving space to aspects of the index client's identity that may have been forgotten as a result of radicalisation.

The story of my name

Target groups: Index clients 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper, pens

Our name is an important part of our identity. It establishes a sense of belonging to our family and where we are from. Some people really like their name, some hate theirs, while others may give themselves a completely new name. In the context of religiously motivated extremism, an index client might choose a new Arabic name to express their affiliation and sense of belonging to the extremist community. Names can therefore be very emotionally charged on various levels. As soon as names deviate from the majority social norm, however, and imply "otherness", they can become the starting point for discrimination. While the name "Peter Müller" would not attract any attention in Germany, "Metin Çiçek" certainly would.

In a representative survey of primary school teachers which asked them to assess children's performance at school based on a child's first name, this unequal treatment was very evident. The associated mechanisms can take effect as soon as the teacher sees the child's name, meaning the child has virtually no chance to assert themselves in any other way (cf. Universität Oldenburg 2009). In other words, the child experiences whether their name has a positive or negative connotation in society in (early) childhood, and this continues throughout their school and work life, as well as in other areas of societal participation. It can therefore be valuable for clients to experience having their own name talked about positively in counselling. This does not mean ignoring all their negative and painful experiences, but rather adding appreciation of their name into the equation. It is not possible to undo social discrimination perpetrated on the basis of a name, nor to prevent it in the future. However, it is possible for the client to gain a new perspective on their name, which, at an individual level, gives them the opportunity to take a stronger position on it.

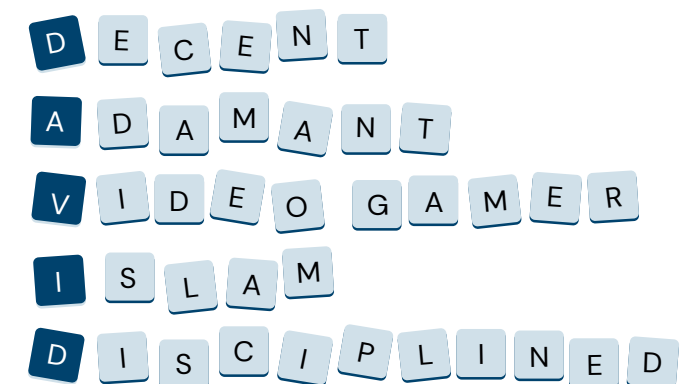
The client is asked to write their first name (and last name(s), if applicable) in the centre of a piece of paper. At the beginning, the following questions can be explored together:

- "Where does the name come from?"
.....
- "What does the name mean?"
.....
- "Who chose the name? What's the story behind it?"
.....
- "What do you particularly like about your name?"
.....
- "What would you like to change about your name?"
.....
- "How has your name characterised you in particular?"
.....

If a new name has been adopted at the time of conversion and the client has chosen this for the exercise, the counsellor can also ask further explicit questions about this:

- "How did you choose your new name and what do you associate with it? What's the story behind it?"
.....
- "What has changed for you with the new name?"
.....
- "What does your birth name mean to you? What memories – positive and negative – do you associate with it?"
.....

Some questions may also lead to the client revealing experiences of discrimination, which must be treated in a non-judgemental and supportive manner. However, addressing these experiences can lead to the discovery of resources. In order to develop further resources in relation to the client's name, it can be helpful for the client to take the individual letters of their name and think of skills, characteristics and interests that characterise them:



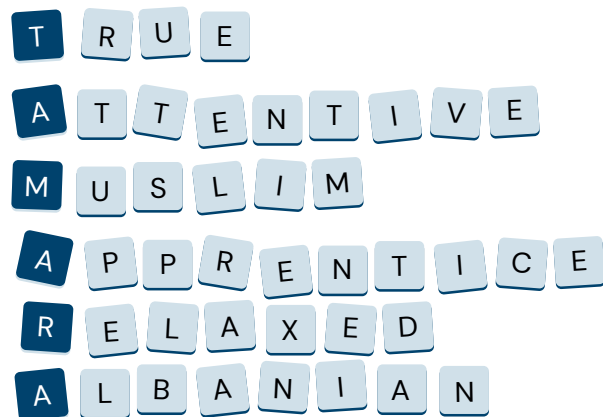


Fig. 18: The names of two index clients as examples

Diversity iceberg⁴¹

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper, pens

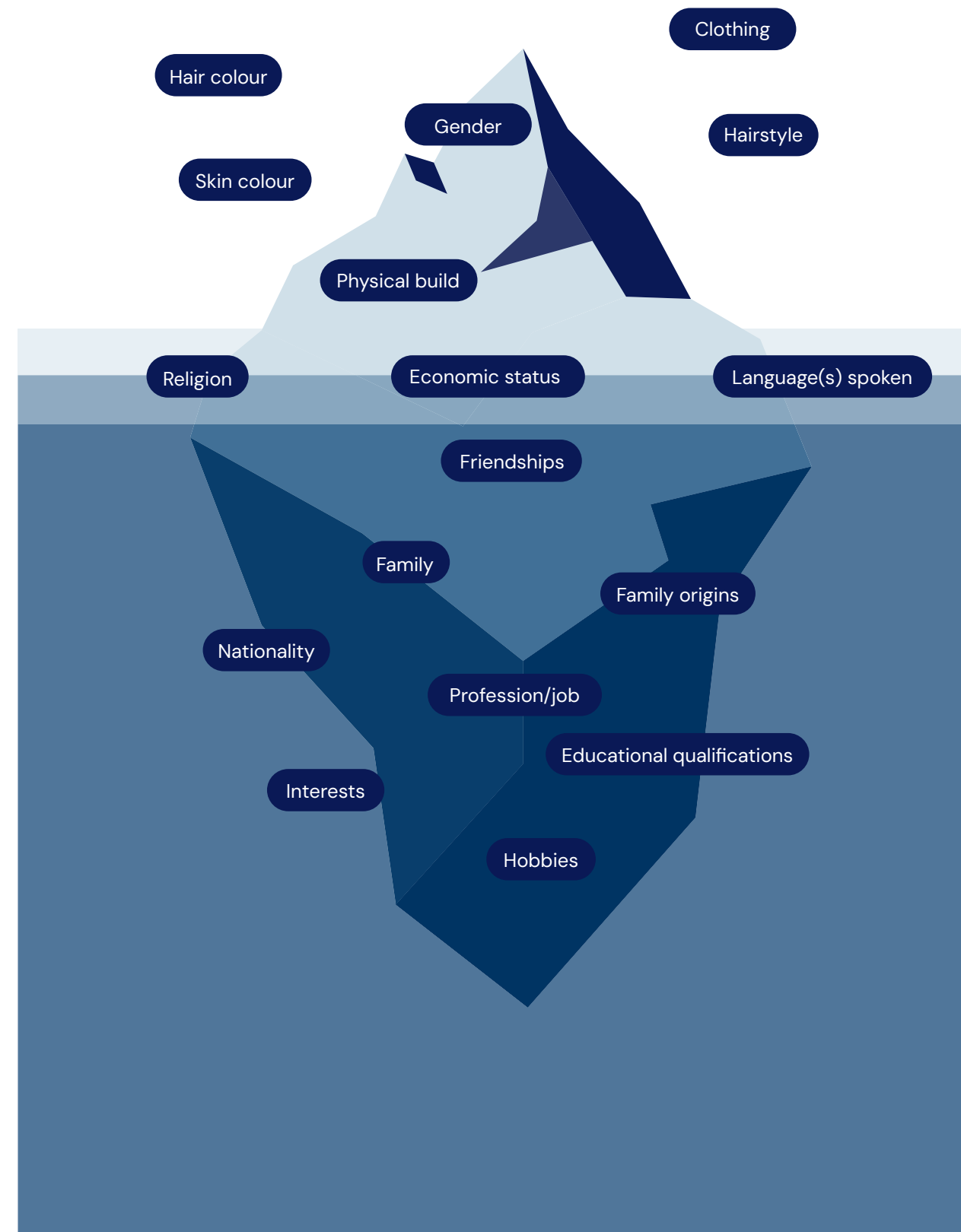
The “iceberg model” has already been explained in detail in a previous section in the context of feelings and needs (→ 7.2). In addition to that purpose, however, it can also be used in the context of anti-discrimination education to reflect on the visibility or invisibility of identity characteristics, and related discrimination.

First, an iceberg is drawn on a sheet of paper. Unlike the original iceberg model, there are three levels here, which are marked by a double water surface (see Fig. 19). The counsellor and client together seek to identify characteristics that:

1. are visible,
2. may become visible within a relatively short space of time or are closely linked to the visible characteristics, or
3. are not visible without knowing the person well.

This can produce very different results, as some features may be located at different points on the iceberg. For example, a disability may be visible or invisible.

⁴¹The method is taken from Pates et al. (2010) and has been extended for the counselling context.



In the same way, for some people clothing is a reference to their profession because they wear work clothes; in other cases it is a reference to religious faith due to its symbolic significance. A prominent example in this context is that of Muslim women wearing headscarves or otherwise veiling themselves. Once the iceberg has been completed, the counsellor reflects, together with the client, on why the client chose those characteristics and how they decided on their positioning. The interplay between the different levels is also important here. In this step, the individual characteristics can be reflected on in terms of their significance for the client. Clients should recognise that there are certain characteristics that always remain visible (e.g. skin colour) or invisible (e.g. interests). People are often only judged by their visible characteristics, although these may not necessarily be very relevant to their identity and usually only comprise a small part of it. In addition, clients should be made aware that assumptions about the invisible parts of people are often made based on what is visible – for example, by inferring nationality, religion or gender solely from the person's external appearance. This means that there is always a risk of discrimination with all visible characteristics, unless these are seen as socially privileged.

On the one hand, this realisation can help clients to understand that there is far more to them than may be apparent at first glance, and this can sometimes reveal important resources. On the other hand, religiously motivated extremism itself also contains ideologies which devalue others, so exploring the complexity of the client's own identity in terms of its visible and invisible components may provide the opportunity to shift the client's perspective regarding people they devalue through their ideology.

This exercise can also be carried out with relatives and professionals in reference to the index client. That can facilitate a new perspective on the index client, in which the focus is no longer only on the radicalisation itself, but allows all the other parts of the person's identity to come into view once more. This provides opportunities to identify potential sources of impetus for distancing and offers to resume or start relationships. The focus of reflection should primarily be on the invisible parts of the client's identity, because this is where it is most likely that new insights can be gained and forgotten common ground rediscovered.

Beliefs and Values

Beliefs, spirituality and values play a prominent role in the lives of many clients. It is not uncommon for the client to reference spirituality and specific values when citing reasons for converting to Islam and/or joining Islamist or (purist) Salafist groups. It therefore follows that spirituality is often dealt with directly or indirectly as a topic in counselling.



Spirituality and beliefs

Spirituality can be understood as both a need and a resource. It encompasses what people believe in and what contributes to the construction of their identity, and their development opportunities and limitations. These include basic assumptions about their own lives and life in general, as well as explanations of events, behavioural patterns, options and meaningfulness. In addition, spirituality can be a source of support for people in relation to questions of values and mortality (cf. Brentrup/Kupitz 2015: 11). Spirituality is therefore primarily a resource and not a destructive element. People often describe a spiritual experience as a moment of dissolution of boundaries and transcendence that is difficult to put into words.

The terms “belief” or “beliefs”, on the other hand, are usually understood in a more cognitive and all-encompassing way, and are typically linked to the teachings of a specific religion and the statements of the authorities associated with it (cf. Austeda 1989). Belief can therefore be understood more as a collective concept, while spirituality allows for a more individual approach.

“Anyone who has grown up in an ideological, religious and spiritual environment or has found a home there has many answers at their fingertips, often to questions that have not yet even been asked,” writes philosopher Ursula Baatz (2017: 18). This is also confirmed by counsellors' experience; they often find that it is not young Muslims, who are active and integrated in German Islamic associations and/or mosque communities, who become radicalised, but rather young people who have grown up in households where there has been less religious education. The question of meaning comes to the fore for these young people when they stop being able to take everyday actions and life for

granted. Sometimes the reasons are obvious, such as a break-up, a death, a loved one becoming ill or personal experience of marginalisation at school or at work. However, questions of orientation may sometimes arise for no apparent reason, when people begin to question everything that gives life its meaning. This can be problematic insofar as meaning then takes on an orientation function. Theologians and philosophers therefore also speak of meaning as the orientational knowledge that people strive for. "Those who are orientated can shape their actions for the future. Orientation is a prerequisite – ethically speaking – for taking responsibility; [and] psychologically speaking, for experiencing self-efficacy" (ibid.: 19). Those who have orientational knowledge therefore experience their actions and existence as coherent. Orientational knowledge is not static, however, but always changing. It is supplemented and expanded by experience and transferred to new situations and challenges. Closely linked to orientational knowledge are values.



Values

According to sociologist Clyde Kluckhohn, a value describes what a person considers to be desirable and worth striving for. Values can therefore be understood as general principles that provide orientation or orientational knowledge, and influence our actions by influencing our goals and the way in which they are achieved. In addition to actions, values also influence a person's perceptions (cf. Frey 2016: 4, 7) and thus support the categorisation of experiences and situations in their dealings with others.

Questioning values and identifying contradictions between actions and values is therefore a key driver of change processes for many people. This is because people strive to be, or at least to appear to be, free of contradictions in order to reduce inner states of dissonance, which can manifest themselves as feelings of guilt, for example (cf. Festinger 1957). "Living a life of integrity means behaving in a way that is consistent with and fulfils your core values. Integrity is a goal or need that is only ever approached incompletely, an intentional process of approaching the preservation of self-declared goals" (Miller/Rollnick 2015: 110).

Conditions in which a person lacks integrity and orientation can be described as a "cognitive opening" (→ 2.2). This is often the starting point for the realignment of a person's behaviour and/or values. For clients, such conditions have often been the origin of the radicalisation process. Understanding this forms part of every counselling process. However, for many clients, dealing with these issues is not only a very personal, but also an existential matter, as, in questioning their own values, they run the

risk of being (re)confronted with a loss of direction and meaning. Counsellors should always keep this aspect in mind when they work with clients to question their previous behaviour or values. The aim of counselling should therefore never be to "free" clients from their spirituality or beliefs in general, but merely to work together and carefully look at realigning destructive behaviours and values. In some cases, this kind of supported reorientation may be directly requested by the index client – for example, if a client, after joining the so-called "Islamic State", has come to the shocking realisation that it is now devoid of any sense of the mercy of God and the "brotherhood" of Muslims, and increasingly experiences a feeling of inner dissonance.

However, the (re)orientation of spirituality and values in the client does not have to be addressed directly as a session topic, but can be considered a cross-sectional task spanning all distancing and exit work. It is therefore also possible to bring up the issue of values in the context of biographical work – during the process of tidying up or updating guiding principles or beliefs, for example (→ 7.5). Values and spirituality can also be queried, mapped and laid out in methods such as the "river of life" (→ 7.5) or constellations on the family board (→ 7.4).

Direct discussion of beliefs, spirituality and values is therefore very useful in two situations: firstly, if the client is already in a phase of disorientation and searching for meaning. In such cases, the counsellor can help the client to find their bearings again and thus regain some stability in life. Secondly, in a scenario where there is no clear motivation for change processes apparent in the client, but there is a contradiction between the actions and values that the client ascribes to themselves. This contradiction can perhaps then become the impetus for change.

Value exploration

Target groups:	Index clients, relatives 
Time frame:	Session exercise 
Materials:	Cards with different values written/ printed on them

Counsellors can use the process of exploring values to support clients in approaching the topic of their own values. In the process, contradictions between the values the client ascribes to themselves and their actual behaviour can become apparent, which may give rise to change processes. The methods require a large number of cards, each printed with a different value. Alternatively, the counsellor can make their own. There are lists available which offer a good starting point, such as the following list, based on Miller, Baca, Matthews and Wilbourne and slightly adapted (see Miller/Rollnick 2015: 105ff.):

Acceptance Being accepted for who I am	Accuracy Being precise with my opinions and beliefs
Adventure Having new and exciting experiences	Affiliation Having the feeling of belonging, of being part of something
Art Appreciating art or expressing myself in art	Attractiveness Being physically attractive
Authority Being in a leadership role	Autonomy Being self-directed and independent
Beauty Enjoying being surrounded by beauty	Carefulness Being careful and conscientious in everything I do
Caring Caring for others	Challenges Tackling difficult tasks and problems
Comfort Leading a life of comfort and ease	Commitment Entering into lasting, meaningful relationships
Compassion Acting compassionately and out of concern for others	Complexity Embracing the uncertainties of life
Compromise Willingness to give and take in order to reach an agreement	Consistency Leading a reasonably consistent life
Cooperation Working together with others	Courage Being brave and strong in the face of adversity
Creativity Creating new things and being imaginative	Curiosity Finding out things, experiencing and learning new things

Determination Giving my life meaning and direction	Diligence Working well and hard on my life tasks
Ecology Living in harmony with the environment	Excitement Leading an exciting life full of thrills
Experiencing love Being loved by those closest to me	Expertise Mastering my daily activities
Family Having a happy, loving family	Fantasy Having dreams and seeing possibilities
Fitness Being physically fit and strong	Flexibility Being able to adapt easily to new circumstances
Freedom Being free from unreasonable restrictions and limitations	Friendship Having close, supportive friends
Fun Playing and having fun	Generosity Sharing what I have with others
Giving love Giving love to others	Glory Being known and recognised
God's will Recognising and obeying God's will	Gratitude Being grateful and appreciative
Growth Never stopping changing and growing	Happiness Joy/enjoying life, being able to enjoy life
Health Being in good physical condition and healthy	Honesty Being honest and truthful
Hope Maintaining a positive and optimistic attitude	Humility Being unpretentious and modest

Humour Seeing the humorous side of myself and the world	Independence Being free from dependency on others
Inner peace Being at peace with myself	Integrity Living my daily life according to my values
Intelligence Keeping my mind sharp and alert	Intimacy Sharing my personal experiences with others
Justice Standing up for fair and equal treatment for all	Knowledge Accumulating and passing on valuable knowledge
Leadership Encouraging and supporting others	Leisure Taking time to relax and enjoy life
Loyalty Being faithful and loyal in a relationship	Mindfulness Living mindfully and being aware of the moment
Moderation Avoiding excesses and finding the right balance	Monogamy Being in a uniquely close and intimate love relationship
Music Enjoying music and expressing myself in it	Nonconformism Questioning and challenging authorities and norms
Openness Being open to new experiences, ideas and opportunities	Order Leading an orderly and well-organised life
Participation Making a lasting contribution to the world	Passion Connecting deep feelings to ideas, actions or people

Patriotism Loving my country, serving it and wanting to protect it	Politeness Behaving politely and considerately towards others
Popularity Being liked by many people	Power Having control over others
Pragmatism Concentrating on what is feasible, reasonable and sensible	Prosperity Having a lot of money
Protecting Giving loved ones safety and security	Providing for Looking after my family and making provisions for them
Realism Realistic and pragmatic judgement and action	Reason Being guided by reason, logic and coherence
Reconciliation Being conciliatory towards others	Reliability Being reliable and trustworthy
Responsibility Making and implementing decisions responsibly	Romance Experiencing intense, exciting love
Security Feeling safe and secure	Self-acceptance Accepting myself as I am
Simplicity Living a modest life without many expectations	Solitude Having time and space for myself away from others
Self-control Acting with discipline	Self-knowledge Having a deep knowledge of myself and being honest with myself
Self-respect Having a good feeling about myself	Sense of duty Fulfilling my duties and obligations

Sexuality Having an active and satisfying sex life	Simplicity Living a modest life without many expectations
Solitude Having time and space for myself away from others	Spirituality Spiritual growth and maturity
Success Achieving important goals	Taking risks Taking risks and seizing opportunities
Tolerance Accepting and respecting those who are different to me	Tradition Following the accepted rules of the past
Truthfulness Acting in such a way that I am true to myself	Variety Leading a life full of change and diversity
Virtue Leading a morally impeccable and committed life	World peace Doing something to foster peace in the world

In addition to the values mentioned here, it may also be useful to add values that play a special role in the client's faith. For example, in Islam, Allah has 99 names, such as The Merciful (ar-Raḥeem), The Source of Peace (as-Salam), The Preserver of Safety (al-Muḥaymin), The Constant Forgiver (al-Ghaḥfar) and The Most Appreciative (ash-Shakoor). These names are also characteristics or values that can easily be incorporated into this exercise. There should also be some blank cards available on which the client can later add any values they feel are missing. In addition to the value cards, five cards that denote the respective piles are required. These should be labelled: "Most important", "Very important", "Important", "Less important" and "Unimportant".

The client is then asked to sort the value cards into the five different piles. The counsellor should mention to the client that this process generally takes a while and that they can take their time, as sorting a hundred cards can be a little daunting. Once the sorting from "Unimportant" to "Most important" has been completed, it is always advisable to ask the client whether they wish to add any values that are significant in their life but are not included in the cards. The client is then asked to select five

to ten values from the "Most important" pile and sort them in order, starting with the most important one. If there are not enough cards in the "Most important" pile, some cards from the "Very important" pile may be included in this selection. This first step of sorting often triggers a process of inner reflection and questioning in the client (see Miller/Rollnick 2015: 105).

In the second step, the "Most important" values and their significance for the client's life are discussed together. It is helpful here to use open questions and lots of reflection (mirroring/paraphrasing) (→ 6.3). However, the counsellor should refrain from hypothesising or formulating explanations regarding the client's values, as this is generally perceived as being intrusive by the client and tends to disrupt the intimate process of exploring values.

Example:

Counsellor:	I see that you have designated "Protection" as your most important value. How important is that to you? [open question]
Client:	Well, I've always been the protector. I protected my mother in the past and now I protect and look after my wife and children.
Counsellor:	So you protect and care for your family. [simple reflection]
Client:	Yes, a real man should do that.
Counsellor:	A real man should protect his family. And you are a real man. How do you protect them? [reflection and open questions]
Client:	Well, if someone disrespects my wife or hurts her or, even worse, my children, then I'll punch him in the face. Then he'll be in real trouble.
Counsellor:	So you protect your family by any means necessary. They seem to be very important to you and you seem to love them very much. [complex reflection]
Client:	They are everything to me. I would do anything for them. I would never let them down.
Counsellor:	You would never leave them on their own. Why is that so important to you? [simple reflection and open question]
Client:	Well, when I was ten years old, my father abandoned us. He simply disappeared. I felt totally alone. My mother was devastated, too ... I often had to protect her.

Discovering a client's top five or ten values in this way is helpful for understanding them better. It makes it possible to gain a deeper insight into the other person by finding out why they consider certain values to be guiding principles, and what motivates them. This exploration can initiate new processes of reflection for clients, and these may also reveal discrepancies between their values and the way they are leading their lives. If the inner conflict becomes too great, this can often be the starting point for clients to change their behaviour (see Miller/Rollnick 2015: 109). In addition, the process allows those values that might act as resources for supporting change processes to become evident. For example, counsellors report that parenthood and the associated reorientation towards the value of family can often cause radicalised individuals to want to distance themselves and disengage from extremism.

Depicting spirituality

Target groups: Index clients, relatives



Time frame: Longer exercise ⌚

Materials: Paper, crayons/coloured pencils/paint and brushes

Some people find it difficult to talk directly about spirituality, as it is a very personal and private subject. Children and young people, as well as clients whose first language is not the local majority language, may sometimes find it easier to approach this topic through art and express their spirituality in shapes and colours. After all, the search for spirituality is often prompted by questions about creation and transience. This process can be observed almost metaphorically in the creation of a drawing or painting. With its appeal to several sensory levels, drawing/painting can therefore act as a key to enable clients to enter into an inner and outer dialogue about their spirituality. All that is required are paper and crayons or coloured pencils, or, alternatively, paint and brushes.

As a counsellor, it is important to introduce this exercise in a religiously sensitive way, especially with Muslim clients. Even though Islamic history features a great deal of artistic creativity, including in architecture, explicit depictions of God and Muhammad remain a taboo for many Muslims. Counsellors should therefore avoid asking clients to draw a picture of God and encourage them instead to approach this topic abstractly. Clients can, of course, draw or paint whatever they wish in terms of subject matter. If the drawing or painting is to take place in the counselling session itself, thought must be given to the correct setting. Many people would be uncomfortable being observed while drawing/painting. To avoid this situation, the counsellor

and any other family members present should therefore also draw or paint at the same time, to relieve the pressure. As an alternative to drawing/painting during the counselling session, the client can also be asked to do this as "homework".

However, creating the picture is only the first step. It is then important that the picture is appreciated and discussed in detail. Open and interested questions can lead to a more in-depth dialogue, e.g.:

- *"What was your experience while drawing/painting?"*
- *"What questions came into your mind while you were drawing/painting?"*
- *"What title would you give your picture?"*
- *"What do the colours you've chosen stand for?"*
- *"How does this picture represent your spirituality and faith?"*
- *"Would you have drawn/painted the picture like this a few months or years ago?"*
- *"If your friends looked at this picture now, what do you think they would recognise?"*
- *"What do you want to do with this picture now? Are you going to hang it up somewhere?"*

When asking questions, the counsellor should also consider the colours, patterns and shapes selected in order to fully exploit the potential of the exercise. These elements can often represent life events, e.g. (spiritual) crises, values or the beliefs themselves. They therefore offer plenty of material for an in-depth reflection process.

Diversity within a religion

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise ⌚

Materials: Pictures of various well-known Muslim figures, cards or a flipchart

Many clients have a very strict understanding of religion in which only their own beliefs and values are recognised as legitimate. Views that differ from theirs are, on the other hand, often denigrated and may even be used to justify acts of violence. It therefore makes sense to actively confront clients with a diverse

range of Muslim lifestyles and incorporate these into discussions. For the exercise “Diversity within a faith”, numerous photographs and pictures of different Muslim people are required, including of some well-known figures. These should include people who can be read as Muslim, e.g. because they wear a headscarf or traditional clothing, as well as people whose religious affiliation is not immediately identifiable. The photos are randomly spread out on a table and the client is asked to look at them for a while and consider them. The first step is a dialogue where the client and counsellor reflect together on how the client feels about these diverse representations of Muslim life. Core questions might be:

- *“When you look at the pictures of all the different Muslims, how do you feel?”*
- *“Are there people here who you didn’t even know believed in Allah, and Muhammad as their prophet?”*
- *“What life experiences do you share with these people? What do you have in common?”*
- *“Are there people you see as role models? What values do you think you share with these people?”*

In the case of role models among the Muslim individuals, it can be helpful to note down together the values that the client attributes to the person in question on index cards or a flipchart. The values mentioned here can reveal a great deal about the client’s self-image and orientation knowledge. In many cases, these values represent a resource for the client, which can give them support and purpose in times of crisis.

As the aim is to promote a tolerance of ambiguity in the client with regard to others’ beliefs and values, the second step is for the client to name a person in the photos who they feel most repelled by. The exercise now focusses on this person, and the client is asked to describe in as much detail as possible what they find repulsive about the person. The client may also dispute the person’s Muslim faith. As the client is unlikely to know the people in the photos personally, this description is essentially a projection, often based on the client’s own experiences, needs and wishes. As the client describes what they suppose person to be like, the counsellor should carefully write down these characteristics and values on cards and then explore them in more detail with the client. What has led to the client distancing themselves from certain values and characteristics? How does this link in to the client’s life story? For example, has the client had experiences with people who have similar characteristics to the person in the picture? And were these perhaps negative experiences?



Example:

Counsellor:	You have selected and described Aisha Mohammed. You said that you find her boastful, arrogant and egotistical. I didn’t quite understand that; can you explain to me again what you mean?
Client:	Well, she’s always on the TV talking about how great she is. And how much she stands up for Muslims. But what exactly does she do?
Counsellor:	Have you ever looked at her biography and seen what she does?
Client:	No, but I don’t have to. I know she’s a teacher and I know people like that. They always talk about what they’re supposedly doing for others, but they’re actually only thinking about themselves.
Counsellor:	Ah, who have you had that experience with?
Client:	My class teacher was like that too. She always said she supported me. But in reality, she didn’t do anything. She didn’t even listen to me properly. She never understood that I didn’t have the same freedoms as her and that my life wasn’t so easy. I always had to support my parents, I couldn’t just do what I wanted.
Counsellor:	So you didn’t feel seen. You were alone with your problems. And what I heard was that you wanted more freedom.
Client:	Yes, that’s how it was.
Counsellor:	That’s interesting, because I see that you’re now in a very constricted situation again.
Client:	Hmm, how do you mean?
Counsellor:	Well, you’ve already told me, in our discussions, how you live your faith. There are lots of rules. And if something doesn’t fit in with those rules, you devalue it. So you don’t allow yourself the freedom to even think about it. Just like now with Aisha Mohammed. You haven’t informed yourself about her or taken an interest in her – you didn’t even see her as a person. Just like you say your teacher used to do with you. And then you transfer your previous experiences to the current situation and people, but without checking whether they are really as you imagine them to be. And what you are missing out on there are perhaps opportunities to have new experiences and develop yourself further, to feel freer. At the same time, you treat other people the way your teacher used to treat you.
Client:	Huh, no, I’m not like my teacher, I’m completely different. Mmm, I’ve never really seen it like that before.

Counsellor:	Well, perhaps Aisha Mohammed can be both – a self-confident Muslim woman on TV and, at the same time, ready to help?
Client:	I guess it could be that she's not that bad. Sometimes people have several sides to them. And sometimes I'd like to be a bit more self-confident too.

The above example illustrates that the aim with clients is to explore their projections. When clients become aware of these, they will ideally be able to think more freely and develop more curiosity; that can then become the starting point for new experiences and ultimately also for change processes in their lives.

Progress and Setbacks

Progress and setbacks are part of change and can be seen particularly when the desire for change is not yet sufficiently consolidated due to cherished habits, overwhelming feelings of shame and guilt (→ 7.9) or other feelings of ambivalence (→ 7.11). It is therefore not uncommon for a client to describe having taken two steps forward one week and one step back the next. Their emotional state can vary greatly, from euphoric to depressed.

Progress

Making progress in counselling and therapy contexts does not mean that clients will never revert to their old behaviours or no longer feel negative emotions in their lives. Instead, it can be seen as a sign of progress if clients understand causes, reaction patterns and their effects (on others) and are (emotionally) aware of them. Awareness opens up new ways for clients to deal with stressful situations, so that destructive feelings and behaviours occur less frequently, subside more quickly or are less pronounced. These new approaches can also give clients the opportunity to enter situations that they may previously have avoided for fear of rejection or being judged (cf. Wolf 2020).

However, if the client's feeling of "not making progress" in counselling persists over a longer period of time, it can lead to a loss of motivation, withdrawal from counselling and possibly even a relapse into old, habitual (extremist) behaviours or re-engagement with the old communities. Counsellors should therefore prepare themselves and their client for these situations and always point out that change processes seldom progress in a linear fashion, but often ebb and flow, and therefore require time. At the beginning of the counselling process (→ 7.1), it can be helpful not only to talk about the client's goals, but also to discuss their expectations and ensure these are realistic. Clients sometimes have (overly) high expectations of themselves and the counselling process, and may even be driven by the vision of becoming a "new person" within a few sessions. Such high hopes can easily mean that clients do not recognise their achievement in making small (interim) steps in the right direction, leading to disappointment and resignation. It is then the counsellor's task to make the client aware of and appreciate all the positive developments, even if they are only small steps. This does not necessarily require a separate counselling session. It can often suffice to make such changes visible through regular scaling questions (→ 6.3), or for the client to record any progress made which has been mentioned during the counselling session in a diary, on a calendar or on their pinboard at home.

However, if the counselling process continues over many months or even years, it is useful to take time to pause and carry out an interim review with the client. This should be in the form of carefully checking whether the counselling is still developing in line with the defined counselling objectives or whether other topics or objectives are now being addressed. In a scenario of long familiarity and anxiety about parting (→ 7.14), even experienced counsellors may open up further fields of work with the client after the counselling goals have been reached, and these may no longer correspond to the state mandate of the counselling centre. Therefore, regularly looking at progress and setbacks can serve not only the client themselves, but also the counsellor's self-reflection process. In addition, targeted progress reviews can make clients and counsellors alike aware of the finite nature of the collaboration and are therefore an important element in letting go and saying goodbye.

The hand formula

Target groups:	Index clients, relatives, professionals, counsellors 
Time frame:	Short exercise 
Materials:	Paper and pens, if necessary

The “Hand formula” is a little exercise that can be incorporated into counselling sessions and used later by the client on their own to reflect on progress and setbacks in all areas of their life. In this exercise, the five fingers of the hand represent five questions, which the client goes through one by one, as an invitation to reflect on the counselling process and their current situation. The initial letter of the finger forms a mnemonic aid to the questions, making them more memorable.

The Thumb stands for the results of *Thinking*, which conceals the question: “What have I learnt?”. Clients often name new skills and problem-solving strategies in their responses. However, the question also includes whether the index client has been able to learn from their destructive behaviour and mistakes during the counselling process, or even simply whether they can identify them, as this may in itself represent a significant developmental step, depending on the situation and the person.

The index finger, or Arrow finger, refers to the *Achievement of objectives* and represents a control function in the reflection process. The central question here is: “Where have I come closer to achieving my goal(s)?” or “Are my current efforts focussed?”. It is not uncommon for clients to bring a wide variety of challenges to the counselling process at the same time, and it is often better if these are resolved consecutively. There is therefore usually a process of prioritisation at the beginning of the counselling process (→ 7.1). To ensure that clients make the best possible use of their available time and energy, there should be periodic scrutiny of actions and goals so that goals are achieved step by step and counterproductive “problem hopping” is avoided.

The Middle finger represents the client’s *Mental state*, which stands here for the description of the current emotional world. “How does the situation or change feel at the moment?”. A feeling of confidence, fun or joy can motivate clients to continue to make changes. However, identifying stressful feelings such as worry, fear or disappointment is also important, as it is only if these feelings are recognised and discussed that they will lose their power and not become an obstacle to change processes.

The Ring finger can be assigned the keyword *Reintegration*, which refers to scrutinising the community and relationship structures in which the index client lives and determining whether these are beneficial, i.e. whether they represent a resource. Questions here might be: “Who are you currently getting support from? Who has helped you recently? Whose advice would you like to have?” The index client’s connections become visible here; they have a stabilising effect and are very important in the exit process. Alternatively, the ring finger can be associated with the notion of an “advisor”. In that case, the questions would focus on who the client has recently given advice to, and the nature of the advice. This can reveal the client’s experiences of self-efficacy and relationships and also support self-reflection.

And finally, the little finger or Baby finger, which stands for the *Body*. The question here is: “What have I done for myself?”. This is important because change processes are often stressful not only for the psyche, but also for the body, and can give rise to psychosomatic symptoms such as tension or sleep disorders. A weakened body may not be able to provide as much energy for change. It is therefore important that the client takes care of their physical well-being and allows themselves periods of rest, sleep and exercise, and also pays attention to their diet. However, the counsellor should at all costs avoid offering unsolicited lifestyle or nutritional advice. As with the other points, it is much more important to open up space for self-reflection by the client.

The following illustration is a practical aid for memorising the points in this exercise:

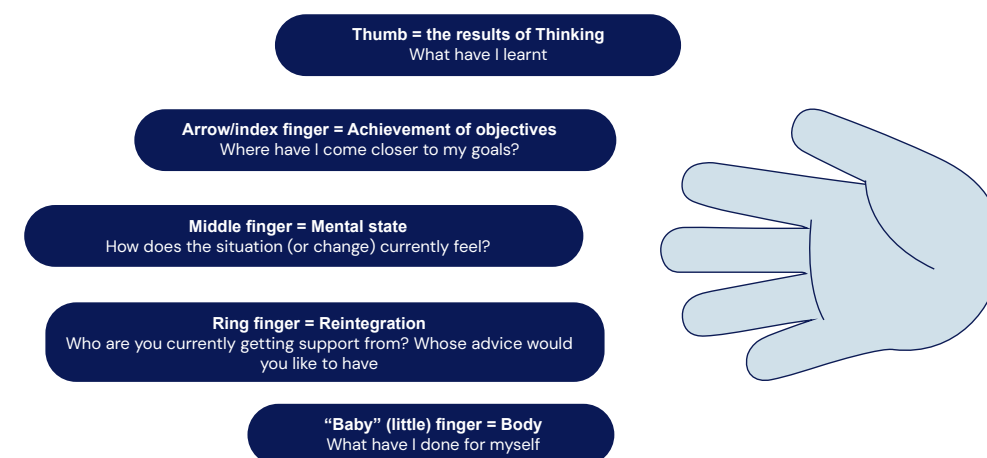


Fig. 20: The hand formula

The hand formula can be used as a verbal exercise in the counselling sessions, and some clients may also want to have it written down in order to have a record of the insights gained. If it is written down, it can be helpful to use the image of the hand and write the keywords on the corresponding fingers. This additional visualisation may anchor the hand formula more firmly in the client’s memory, and performing the exercise could also develop into a personal ritual.

The progress chart

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals, counsellors 🧑🧑🧑🧑

Time frame: Session exercise ⌚

Materials: Flipchart/whiteboard, paper, moderation cards

The progress chart is an extension of the scaling questions. The counselling period is shown on the chart, with the lower horizontal axis representing the time in months, and the vertical axis the scale of stress. As in the scaling questions, the counsellor asks the client to rate their stress level from a "1", signifying "no stress", to a "10", signifying "unbearable stress", referring not just to the present time, but also to various points in time over the specified period of the counselling. The points plotted can be connected to form a progression curve, which can then be analysed.

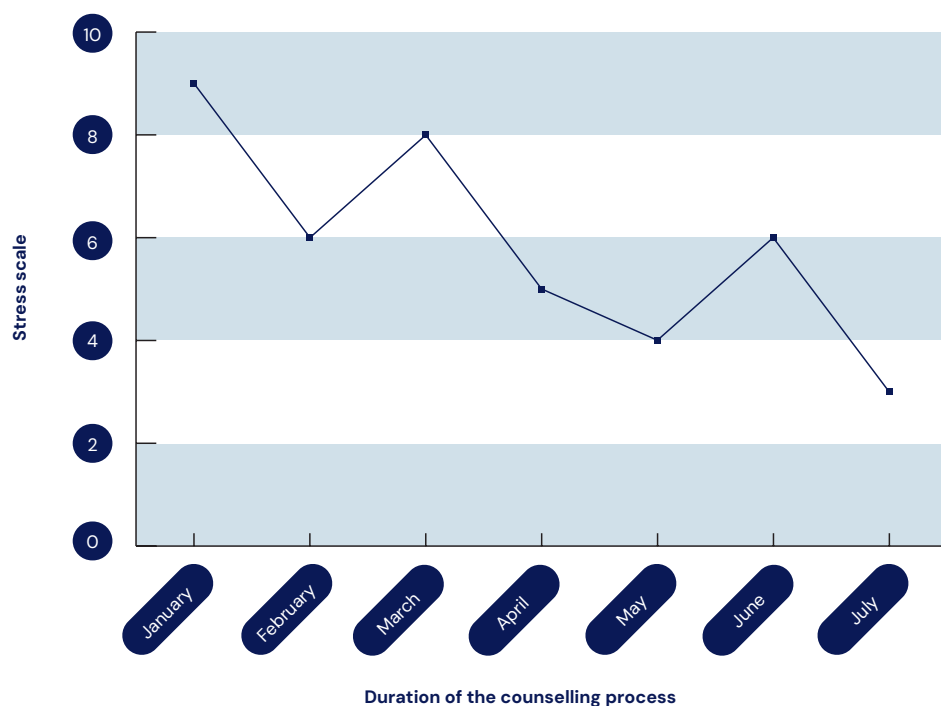


Fig. 21: The progress chart - an example

The chart clearly shows the changes in terms of the stress levels or, in other words, the psychological strain felt by the client. Stress is often a good indicator of change processes and can also be the starting point for them. In order to comprehend this, however, it is important to examine whether the high stress phases correspond to major change processes. In this case, the stress level may indicate positive developments. The vertical axis, instead of indicating the stress level, can be used for other topics, such as the client's relationship with their family, depending on the objective that has been agreed for the counselling process. If the curve shows a general downward or upward trend (depending on how the scaling is defined), this can be interpreted as progress or setbacks, which is shown very clearly in this format. Detailed appreciation of progress should always be part of the counselling process. This includes reflecting on which of the client's (new) skills and resources have played a part in improving the situation. It is helpful to make a note on the progress curve when the client acquires or uses such resources, as this can help to make them more visible. It is also important to discuss any developments that the client has experienced as a setback, exploring which specific moments these were and also what part the client themselves may have played in them, if applicable. The focus here is on conveying that self-development also means learning from one's mistakes. In the case of setbacks, the focus should be on the client gaining an insight into their own actions and noting which of their resources were helpful to them. This can help the client to overcome situations that they experienced as setbacks.

Circular imagined feedback

Target groups: Index clients 🧑

Time frame: Session exercise ⌚

Materials: Moderation cards, lengths of rope (if necessary)

It is not always easy for clients to recognise and name progress made in their personal development, especially if this has been on a small scale. High expectations or shame (→ 7.9) connected to guiding principles (→ 7.5) can play a part here. It is therefore often helpful to give the client an outside perspective by, for example, involving family members or friends in the counselling session and asking them to describe the progress the index client has made (with regard to the counselling goal) since the start of the counselling process. Progress and setbacks become more apparent with this input and can be acknowledged and appreciated. However, it is not always possible to involve third parties directly in the counselling process.

In this case, it may be helpful to put the client themselves in

a position where they have an external perspective and can give themselves feedback. In its simplest form, this can be achieved by asking circular questions (→ 6.3). However, undertaking a physical exercise enables a deeper examination of the change of perspective and a different way of experiencing it. For this exercise, the counsellor lays out a square on the floor, containing nine smaller squares (arranged three by three). Lengths of rope are useful for outlining the squares. A card with the client's name on it is placed in the centre square. For the outer squares, the client can name up to eight people from whom they would like to receive feedback on their self- development progress. These may include people who are no longer accessible for the client, e.g. because they are deceased. The names of the people are written on cards and one placed in each of the outer squares.

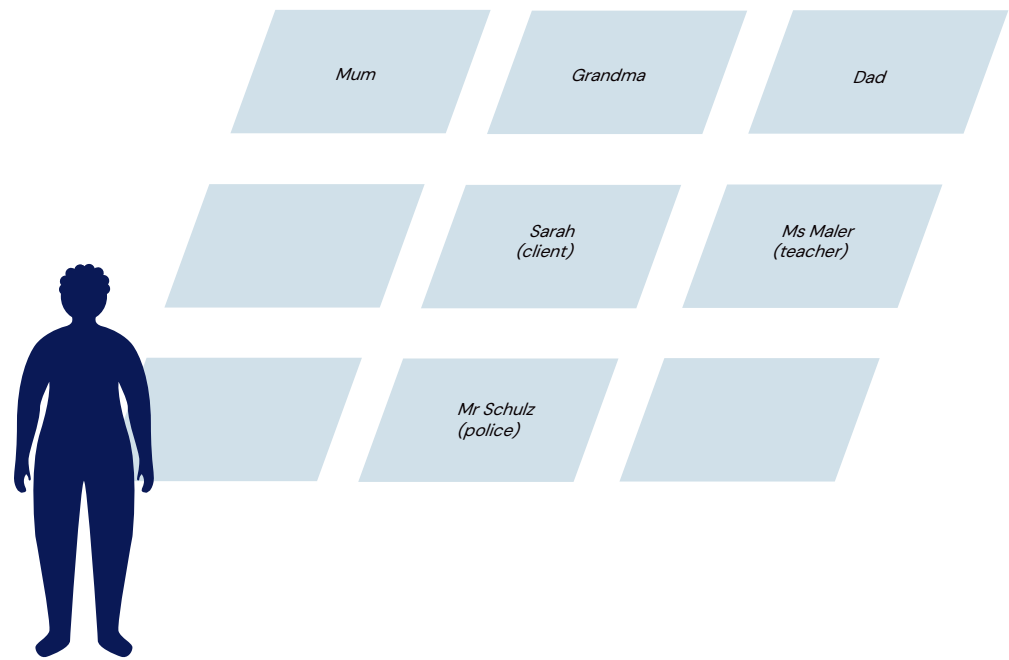


Fig. 22: Circular imagined feedback - an example

The client steps into one of the outer squares and looks at their own name card in the centre square. They then assume the role of the person whose name is in the square where they are standing. The counsellor can support the assumption of this role by first asking the client general questions about their “character”:

- “What’s your name?”
- “How old are you?”

- “What is your relationship to [the client]?”

Once the client has taken up the role, the counsellor begins to ask the “character” about the client’s progress and setbacks. It is important to ask open questions and to avoid making judgements. This is the only way to provide the space for the answers to be authentically experienced.



Example:

Counsellor:	Michaela, as Sarah’s mother, what has been your experience with your daughter over the past few weeks?
Client:	I find Sarah more open again. She talks to me more. That hasn’t been the case for a long time. And it makes me happy. She also seems more relaxed and less tense. [client speaking in the role of the mother]
Counsellor:	So you’ve noticed a marked change, including in your relationship?
Client:	(...)
Counsellor:	Is there anything you would like to say directly to Sarah about the changes? If so, then tell her directly.
Client:	Mmm ... Sarah, I am very happy to have you back.

The key statements should always be written down on index cards by the counsellor. If the counsellor feels that they have understood the perceptions stated by the “character” in relation to the index client’s development process, they can ask the client to step out of the square and thus out of the role. It can also help to emphasise this shedding of the role with a symbolic gesture by the client, e.g. turning full circle. The key statements recorded on the card are now left in the corresponding square. The process then starts all over again. The client stands in the next square field, takes on the next role and is again questioned by the counsellor. Once the client has gone through all the outer squares, or roles, in this way and the key statements have been collected, the exercise moves on to the next phase.

The client stands in their own square in the centre of the larger square. The counsellor now takes on the roles in the outer squares one by one, and repeats to the client the key statements (on the cards) made by the index client when they were in those roles. The client listens and should not reply. The focus is on (emotional) acceptance of appreciation, as well as on the client’s critical thought processes.

After this feedback has been given, the counsellor and the client step out of the exercise, and a short debriefing follows.

Care should be taken here not to discuss the exercise too much, but rather to allow the statements made to have their effect. The client and counsellor should therefore focus on discussing their impressions of the client's development and change processes following the exercise, and how they felt during the exercise.

Steps towards the goal

Target groups: Index clients 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: A large room

For the “Steps towards the goal” exercise, a large room is required. Alternatively, if the weather is good, the exercise can be conducted outdoors. A distance of approximately ten steps should be paced out from a designated starting point on the floor/ground to a destination point. At the destination point, the client's current counselling goal should be written on a card, giving as much detail as possible. At the beginning of the exercise, the client stands at the predetermined starting point, facing towards the destination point. Ten statements are then read out to the client.

Statements:



1. I remain motivated to change (in relation to my goal).
.....
2. I have discovered new skills and resources within myself.
.....
3. I now have a better understanding of why I used to behave in such a (destructive) way.
.....
4. I can already see the first changes in myself.
.....
5. I have a supportive social environment and people who will stand by me.
.....
6. People around me have already told me that they perceive me differently.
.....
7. I feel that I have already achieved my first interim goals.
.....
8. I'm proud of what I have already achieved.
.....
9. I believe that I can achieve my counselling goal.
.....
10. I have achieved my counselling goal.
.....

The counsellor and client may modify any of the statements or replace any of them with a different one.

After each statement is read out, the client takes a step towards the goal if they are able to answer “Yes”. After each “Yes” or “No” from the client, the counsellor should take this opportunity to discuss the situation in more depth with the client by asking them open questions. In this way, the counsellor and client can further examine and analyse the client's motivation, where it comes from and any motivational sayings that the client uses. They can then gain a deeper understanding of the client's progress and any setbacks in the current counselling process, and also physically represent the progress made and make it tangible.

Guilt and Shame

In distancing, exiting and social environment work, individuals may experience various feelings of guilt and shame. For index clients, for example, this might be when they reflect on the beliefs they held and the actions they took in the context of radicalisation. These feelings are often intertwined. Feelings of shame may arise because the index client views their thoughts and actions in retrospect as a personal failure (how could I have thought/acted that way?); because they feel rejected and devalued as a result of the (radicalised) behaviour of family members, friends or colleagues (how could you/can you do that?); or because they have not attained certain (self-imposed) performance standards due to radicalisation (e.g. lack of school-leaving qualifications, job loss). Feelings of guilt can also be a key factor in the client being able to come to terms with the situation. Relatives, e.g. parents, often feel guilty for not having recognised their child's radicalisation early enough or for not having prevented them from departing for a war zone. In the case of index clients who have committed offences, feelings of guilt and shame often play a central role in coming to terms with and reflecting on the offences committed. Professionals, e.g. those working in child and youth welfare services, often harbour hidden feelings of shame. They may, for example, be unable to do justice in the cases of individual children and young people due to heavy workloads, meaning that their sense of their own integrity, i.e. their own expectations of themselves, suffers.

These examples serve to show that “shame” relates to the whole person and their inner experience, while “guilt” refers more to an evaluation of specific behaviour(s). It is therefore useful in both cases to refer to “experiencing shame and guilt”

(cf. Lammers 2020: 30f.). Social inequalities within society, such as classism or racism, also mean that, in many cultures, feelings of shame are projected onto minorities, leading to their marginalisation (for a more detailed account, cf. Rushdie 2019). Shame therefore also has a significant socio-political power dimension.

Furthermore, this feeling of inadequacy is directed inwards, towards the self, which makes it narcissistic in nature. Shame can even cause the individual to question their entire self (cf. *ibid.*: 30). However, this may not always be immediately obvious and it is generally concealed behind many masks (for more detail cf. Wurmser 1998). This is due to the various mechanisms that people employ in an attempt to ward off ever-present feelings of shame. Shame and guilt, as well as anger, powerlessness and helplessness, are among the emotions that the individual would prefer to avoid (cf. Lammers 2020: 3). At the same time, shame can retain its power for a prolonged period of time or even for the individual's entire life. People also tend to remember shameful experiences so intensely because they want to avoid having to experience them again. It therefore serves to protect them against further harm (cf. Klingenberger/Ramsauer 2017: 176).



Defence mechanisms to combat shame: pride comes after a fall

Issues of shame are everywhere, as evidenced by the wealth of defence mechanisms (cf. Lammers 2016: 121). It can be the case that an individual projects onto others what they are ashamed of in themselves; shaming others is therefore a way to avoid feeling their own shame. In the context of radicalisation/extremism, proponents of radical or extremist ideologies may express this by devaluing anyone who has differing beliefs. Individuals who are insecure may sometimes attempt to make others also feel insecure – for example, by expressing themselves using complex language. The individual thus takes on a proactive role to protect themselves from the shame associated with feeling powerless. This is why such defence mechanisms can also manifest themselves as defiance, anger or violence, directed either towards oneself or towards others. Women are generally more likely to direct such violence towards themselves, whereas men tend to direct it against others.⁴² Perfection, pressure to achieve or excessive ambition may also conceal shame, in that the individuals concerned may believe that they are otherwise not good enough. It is not uncommon for individuals with an excessive sense of shame to try to numb this by consuming addictive substances

⁴²This is largely due to the different socialisation and social attribution processes that influence gender-specific behaviour in this context.

(cf. Lammers 2010: 17f.), but this can often become a vicious circle.

Experiencing excessive shame can also lead to a suicidal crisis (cf. *ibid.*: 18f.). Shame can often be detected or perceived in an individual's outer appearance, e.g. in their posture, speech or a reddening of the face. If the counsellor observes such signs in the client during a counselling process, they may be able to address them directly with the client. In this way, shame can help to elicit support, compassion and words of comfort. Feelings of shame often play a significant part when it comes to issues relating to the individual's own body and sexuality, and are linked to culturally internalised values and norms within society: "It is not the things or activities themselves that activate shame, but their significance for the individual within society" (Lammers 2016: 125). Shame can also signal that social belonging may be at risk (cf. *ibid.*) and is therefore often accompanied by fear. For example, if the client feels shame regarding sexual desires which contradict their own religious or ideological beliefs, this can cause them severe anxiety. At the social level, they may fear expulsion from the community; while at the level of religion and spirituality, there may also be fear of eternal damnation. Anxieties about feelings of shame are a common reason for a client ceasing to attend counselling or therapy sessions, and it is therefore important that counsellors show sensitivity and guarantee confidentiality when working with clients on this topic. This is only possible if shame is discussed in a constructive way, rather than being treated as a taboo subject.

Although shame is often experienced as a terrible and distressful feeling, it activates important developmental impulses and helps to regulate interpersonal relationships. Rather than seeking to eliminate shame, counsellors should acknowledge it in a constructive way and give the client a safe space to discuss it. Counsellors should therefore avoid denying the client's shame ("You don't need to be ashamed of that."), and instead offer them a safe and trustful setting for discussion ("You feel ashamed? Congratulations! You're a human being! Everyone has this feeling at times – you're not alone.").



Shame as a custodian of human dignity

If relatives, professionals or the index client feel ashamed of their behaviour in the context of radicalisation, it can prompt them to consciously initiate changes and so be able to intervene to counter radicalisation. Shame can encourage clients to do better and also promote autonomy, which makes it an important element in the distancing and exit process. Becoming independent of ideologies and their attendant communities, and making (new) social

contacts by acknowledging pluralistic values and norms is a fundamental milestone in distancing and exit work. This teaches the client to acknowledge that all individuals have dignity – including themselves. Shame may therefore be regarded as a custodian of human dignity, as it can signal that a boundary has been violated.

Guilt, on the other hand, is activated by perceived or real misconduct and actions that cause harm to other people (cf. Lammers 2016: 192f.). At the individual level, the conscience acts as an internal indicator of whether a person feels guilty, while laws and standards are the external measures used to judge the guilt of an individual. In addition, a person can feel guilty of something in relation to themselves or others (cf. Klingenberger/Ramsauer 2017: 177). Guilt, unlike shame, is often directed outwards, and may be accompanied by a strong urge on the part of the person to admit their remorse and take responsibility. People may also feel guilty even though they are not guilty, or they may be guilty but not experience any feelings of guilt. Of the two, the former is a far more common occurrence (cf. Lammers 2016: 53). Working through feelings of guilt with clients is just as important as working on issues of forgiveness. “However, if we manage to forgive the person who has hurt us, we ourselves benefit the most because the negative thoughts and emotions can no longer haunt or burden us” (Klingenberger/Ramsauer 2017: 179). Even if forgiveness is often helpful for the client, it cannot be taken for granted or be a basic expectation. Perpetrators have to take into account that the victims of their actions may choose not to forgive them, and accept that they have the right to feel and decide as they wish. Similarly, the client may also decide not to forgive others. It is therefore important to explore and find other ways of dealing with the situation and making amends.



Apparent avoidance of guilt

As humans, we think what we are feeling and feel what we are thinking. When it comes to feelings of guilt, therefore, many people try not to think about guilt-inducing events (cognitive avoidance). This can manifest itself in clients avoiding talking about certain topics in counselling and therapy (e.g. departing the country to fight or life under the IS). However, such attempts to avoid experiencing guilt seldom lead to a reduction in the feelings of guilt. Instead, the guilt remains in the background or intensifies. Counsellors can help with this by creating a trustful and safe space for discussing it, as it is often the client themselves who will first raise this issue.

In some cases, however, shame is not connected to guilt at all. People may often feel shame if they have been bullied or suffered abuse or rape. People who are poor, ill or in need of help may also feel shame, even though they may not be to blame for their situation. Another difference between shame and guilt is that shame can often only be countered by the person taking drastic action to restore their honour. Radical behaviour may reflect this need to take drastic action. In the most extreme cases, this may lead to martyrdom – an option in fact offered by extremist groups and their ideologies. Individuals who are highly ideologised are often ashamed of how they have behaved in the past, and try to deal with this by living a very “godly” and “pure” life. In the case of clients, radicalisation as a defence mechanism to deal with shame can be worked through with the counsellor and reflected upon.

In a positive sense, shame and guilt can help to promote prosocial behaviour, (re)strengthen bonds, foster personal development and ultimately also support distancing and exit processes. Shame can sometimes help us to put ourselves in another person’s place, avoid potentially shameful situations or recognise them in advance and, in general, lead us to be mindful of and sensitive towards others (cf. Lammers 2016: 121). Taking responsibility for our own guilt can also help and motivate us to come to terms with the damage that has been caused, make amends and express remorse. In some cases, this has motivated people who have exited extremist or radical organisations to undertake independent preventative work after leaving the organisation. However, excessive shame or guilt can have a counterproductive effect and in extreme cases may even indicate self-hatred and/or a mental disorder, such as depression. It is recommended that counsellors make use of peer case consultation or supervision when dealing with highly sensitive issues and uncertainties such as these (→ 8) or refer clients to psychotherapeutic support services (→ 3.1).

The following exercises can be used to examine issues around shame and guilt in counselling work in a constructive and focussed way.

Finding representatives

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals

Time frame: Longer exercise

Materials: ---

In some cases, it may be beneficial for the client to gain some distance from their experience of shame or guilt in order to be able to deal constructively with that experience or their own

culpability. An in-depth exercise that focusses on achieving a change of perspective (→ 6.3) can be helpful for this.⁴³

The first step in the exercise is for the client to think about their own experiences of guilt or shame. The counsellor can encourage the client to think firstly about a specific behaviour of theirs that, from their current perspective, is linked to feelings of shame or guilt, and to write it down. For example, the index client may feel uncomfortable or experience feelings of shame when they look back and remember how they insulted and hurled abuse at classmates or family members for being “infidels”, or how they travelled to a war zone or committed criminal offences in the name of their religion. Parents or relatives may blame themselves for their child’s radicalisation because they feel they neglected the child’s needs due to parental separation and divorce, or they may reproach themselves for not having recognised the warning signs in time. In the situation itself, however, the feelings of guilt and shame were probably not present – they may only have been activated in retrospect. If these feelings are not playing a constructive role (e.g. helping the client to protect themselves from similar situations in the future), but instead form a negative loop with feelings of self-reproach, insecurity and avoidant fears, because the client’s thoughts are constantly revolving around themselves, it can be useful to adopt a systematic approach. The first step is to look at the specific experience or behaviour that activates the feelings of guilt or shame. The counsellor can ask the client to think about the following questions and write down their thoughts, possibly as a “homework” assignment. The exercise can also be carried out in the counselling session, with a discussion of the questions there. It requires a trustful and secure working relationship between the counsellor and client.

First step: Remembering and categorising

“Think of a situation in the past where, in your current view, you reacted with virtually no shame or guilt, i.e. you did not feel those feelings, but you do now, in retrospect.

- *What kinds of behaviour come to mind?*
- *How do you feel about it now?*
- *What has changed? Why do you think and feel differently now?”*

In the second step, the aim is for the client to gain a helpful distance from the chosen experience by better understanding and classifying their own experience or behaviour. This should be achieved primarily through a change of perspective.

©The exercise is taken from Lammers/Ohls (cf. 2017: 67f. and 145ff.) and has been thematically adapted.

Second step: Change of perspective

“Now think of someone you really like. Who is it? Think of them in as much detail as possible. This person you really like now tells you about how they behaved in the same way in a similar situation.

- *How do you react to this story now?*
- *How does that make you feel?*
- *What do you want to do when you hear the story?*
- *How would you treat this person?”*

The counsellor encourages the client to think about and make notes on this second step. The client could take the questions home with them and answer them in writing, for their own perusal. Alternatively, it would be possible to incorporate a shorter version of the exercise, with a discussion, in the counselling session (perhaps similar to the first step).



Example:

Counsellor:	Imagine now that your brother, in the past, insulted and threatened your father, and he now tells you that it worries him, but he doesn’t have the courage to seek contact with his father again. How would you react to him telling you this?
Client:	Hmm, I don’t know. I guess I would say: “Well, you’ve already learnt something from it and presumably wouldn’t do it again. And you’re not the same person now as you were then.”
Counsellor:	And how do you feel when you imagine your brother telling you about this?
Client:	It makes me feel sorry for him. I think to myself that he shouldn’t have treated our father like that, but when he tells me about it, I can see that he misses him. He’s making life difficult for himself, as if he were punishing himself.
Counsellor:	What would you most like to do when he tells you about this?
Client:	What I’d most like to say is: “Come on, get on the phone and send Dad a message. After all, you’re still his son – maybe he’ll reply. You’ve been punishing yourself for such a long time.”

The “shame” square: recognition, protection, belonging and integrity

Target groups: Relatives, professionals,
index clients 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Moderation cards in different colours, pen,
a private space/room

There are four main sources of shame (cf. Marks 2011): 1. Shame can result from the individual having experienced disrespect and marginalisation, so that they are therefore seeking recognition (cf. Honneth 2003). 2. It may also result from the individual's boundaries having been violated – for example, if they have experienced psychological or physical violence – so that the individual therefore seeks protection. 3. It may also primarily stem from experiences of being excluded or not belonging, and therefore longing to belong to a group, community or substitute family. 4. The fourth source of shame is when the individual feels that they are not living in harmony with themselves – this can lead to them not honouring their own values. In this case, where the shame is associated with the individual's conscience, developing personal integrity can be a very important step.

In order for the individual to better understand the underlying causes of their own experiences of shame, and the needs that arise from this, it can be helpful for the counsellor to introduce the topic of the four sources of shame and explore with the client which needs are the predominant ones in their case. This enables the client to deal constructively with their experiences of shame.

1. Labelling the squares

The first step, once the counsellor has invited the client to take part in the exercise, is to label five different-coloured cards as follows: “Shame”, “Disregard”, “Violation of boundaries”, “Marginalisation” and “Violation of my values”. The “Shame” card is placed in the centre of the room, and the cards showing the four sources of shame are laid out surrounding it, in a square format (see Fig. 23). In addition, a meta card (of a different colour) is labelled “Time out” and placed outside the square. The client can withdraw to this card at any time, if they need or wish to.

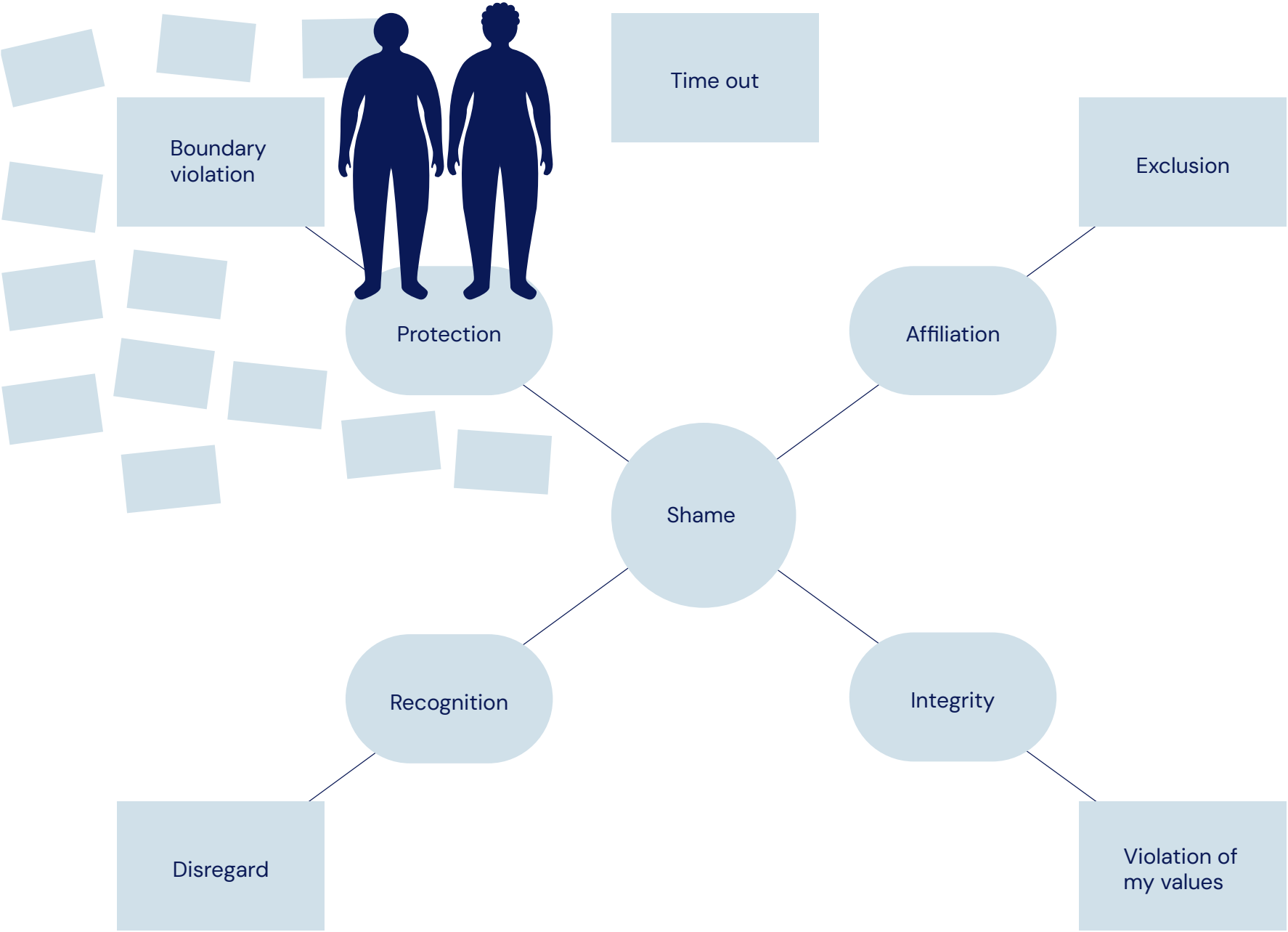


Fig. 23: The “shame” square - an example

2. Gathering memories and associations

In the second step, the counsellor and client both stand in one of the outer sections denoted by the cards. The client should generally decide which section they would like to start with. The counsellor asks for specific memories and associations that come into the client's mind, as well as the feelings associated with them, and notes these down using keywords on the individual cards (of a different colour); these are then placed on the floor around the card that indicates the source of the shame. During this stage, the counsellor usually remains at the client's side as a physical support and does the writing down; this allows the client to fully focus on themselves and their memories and feelings. The following are some supporting questions that might be used:

- *"What experiences can you think of where your boundaries were violated?"*
- *"How could you tell that your boundaries had been violated?"*
- *"What feelings do you associate with this?"*
- *"How were other people able to discern this?"*
- *" ... "*

Counsellors should give clients the space and time to articulate and reflect on their memories and feelings, even if these are unpleasant, sad or painful. However, if the counsellor becomes aware or suspects that this is triggering potentially traumatic experiences in the client and that reflecting on them might be overtaking, the counsellor should suggest a break and that particular experience should not be dealt with in any more depth. The counsellor and client should follow their intuition. If there is doubt at any point, the counsellor should ask the client whether they want to take a break. Once the client has finished reflecting on the first source of shame, the counsellor and client move on to the next step.

3. Reflecting on needs

The next stage involves stating and understanding the need which lies behind each source of shame, and reflecting on the positive aspects. For example, if the counsellor and client have discussed experiences, associations and feelings in the context of boundary violations, the next step would be to explore the underlying need for protection. To do this, a new card is labelled "Protection" and placed between the "Violation of boundaries" card (the source of the shame) and the "Shame" card. The counsellor then helps the client to think about shame as a feeling that can also

prompt them to protect themselves. To do this, the counsellor again asks the client about the experiences, resources and positive feelings that they associate with shame. For example:

- *"What have you done to protect yourself from such experiences and feelings?"*
- *"Who or what helped you?"*
- *"Is there anything else that might have been helpful?"*
- *"What positive feelings do you associate with these resources?"*
- *"What advice would you give to others about how they could protect themselves from such experiences?"*
- *" ... "*

These positive aspects of shame are also noted down on individual cards (of a different colour) and placed on the floor around the "Protection" card. Once this step has been completed, the counsellor can check with the client again about how they are feeling, if necessary, and show appreciation of the resources. Steps 2 and 3 are then repeated for the three other sources of shame and the associated needs (Disregard → need for recognition, Marginalisation → need for belonging, Violation of my values → need for integrity).

4. Overall reflection

Once the client has reflected on each source of shame and the needs associated with it, the counsellor encourages the client to stand where the "Shame" card is and look at the resource cards surrounding it. The aim is now to reflect on which sources of shame are particularly significant, and how the client feels about seeing the negative and positive aspects of the feeling laid out before them. Reflection questions such as the following can be helpful here:

- *"When you stand on the card representing your feelings of shame, and see where those feelings come from, how do you feel?"*
- *"Is there anything that surprises you or that you hadn't realised?"*
- *"Which resources give you the most support when you feel ashamed?"*

- *“How can you find a more consistent and better balance within yourself?”*

5. Gathering resources

At the end of the exercise, the counsellor can give the client the option of taking any or all of the resource and positive feelings cards with them, if they wish. The counsellor then collects up the remaining cards.

Growing up with shame and guilt: questions to ask myself

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals 

Time frame: Short exercise 

Materials: ---

This exercise is about the client being able to find, as they become adults or in their adult lives, a way of dealing with negative ideas about themselves (a sense that there is “something wrong with me”) that may have been ingrained in them in childhood (cf. Lammers/Ohls 2017: 207). If the client becomes estranged from their family of origin as a result of the distancing process (cf. Becker et al. 2020: 29), they may also experience feelings of guilt. “Only when you identify the biographical ties that have been individually shaped by your family and the cultural and religious environment can you consider new behaviours and put them into practice” (Lammers/Ohls 2017: 208).

Counsellors can give clients the opportunity to consciously and critically reflect on such experiences. The aim is for the client to be better able to categorise and understand their underlying feelings of shame and guilt, and the needs associated with them.

Counsellors can give the client the following list of questions and tasks⁴⁴ for critical self-reflection, so that the client can think about them and make notes on them outside of the counselling session:

- What thoughts do I have before I start to feel guilty?
- What thoughts do I have before I start to feel ashamed?
- What adverse cycle of behaviour has this led to so far? What heading, film title or other name would I like to give to this cycle? What would it look like if I drew a picture of it?

- What alternative, concrete forms of behaviour would be possible here?
- What thoughts would help me to feel the way I want to feel in critical situations, as an adult?

The counsellor may wish to give the client a personalised notebook for this exercise, chosen especially for them; having an attractive book to write in may enhance their feelings of self-worth and encourage them to engage methodically in self-reflection.

In the subsequent session, the counsellor can ask the client if they would like to share the thoughts that came to them during their self-reflection. Clients are also free to decline to share or discuss some or all of their insights, if they wish.

The counsellor can guide the shared reflection with the client by asking, for example, what the client found particularly easy or difficult, which questions took them longer or did they find easier, and if they gained any new knowledge or were surprised by anything.

Dealing with feelings of guilt: reparation

Target groups: Index clients 

Time frame: Short exercise 

Materials: ---

In some cases where the client has feelings of guilt, it can be helpful for the counsellor and the client to look together for ways to make reparation. The aim is not to “undo” past behaviour or something they did, but for the client to take responsibility and give something back to the victim(s), to society and ultimately to themselves, in order to create a new context for their experience of guilt and the attendant pain.

This exercise may be most beneficial if the counsellor and client have already ascertained together the extent to which the index client’s feelings are commensurate with an appropriate sense of guilt, e.g. after committing a criminal offence that caused physical or emotional harm to other people. Instead of the client agonising over their own feelings of shame and guilt, it can help to assuage their remorse by channelling it into concrete actions that affirm their acceptance of responsibility. This can place their feelings of shame and guilt in a new context and at the same time guard against repetition of the act. To this end, the counsellor and client gather ideas about what might help the client to make reparation. A mind map might be a useful format for exploring these ideas, with key “reparation” and “reappraisal” measures written under the following subordinate questions:

- What can I do for myself, to forgive myself?
- What can I do for those affected by my action(s)?
- What can I do to contribute to society?

For example, the client could confirm, in a dialogue with themselves or in a letter to their former self, that they forgive themselves because they have learnt from what they did. The client could also offer those affected, e.g. family members or friends, a sincere apology (in person or in a letter), which can also give the victims of offences the opportunity to forgive (but with no obligation to do so). One consideration here, however, is whether it would be appropriate for the client to contact the victim(s) and whether they would welcome it. Victim protection is paramount and the way the offence is addressed in counselling must reflect this. A sensitive approach is therefore required. If a victim decides not to forgive, the client must accept this and process their decision. Approaches that do not require contact with the victim can also be useful, e.g. the client could include the victims of their offence in their prayers from then on, and this may help to relieve the client's feelings of guilt. The client could also strive to make amends through contributing to society or being a good role model for their children. The counsellor should gather all the ideas together, note them down and then, together with the client, determine which of them it would be most feasible for the client to implement and agree an appropriate time frame for this. In distancing and exit processes, such an exercise can in itself be a relief to the client. They are supported in developing a proactive action strategy that moves them on from feeling powerless due to their guilt, and the strategy can also have a preventative effect.

Violence and Trauma

Acts of violence as a result of radicalisation processes (→ 2.2) can often be the reason an individual contacts a counselling centre. The violence can be physical, emotional or verbal in nature, and can be directed against the person themselves (self-endangerment) or others (endangerment of others). It can also be a key push factor for radicalisation and thus a core element in the client's reflection on and processing of radicalisation processes. For example, if the client has experienced marginalisation and disregard, their attempt to cope with this may manifest itself in radical views and behaviours (cf. for example Hößl 2019).



Violence

Violence can take many forms, including physical, psychological, structural, symbolic and political violence (→ 2.2). In contrast to aggressive behaviour, the aim of which is to cause damage or injury, violence also encompasses the perspective of the person being acted upon against their will (cf. Wesuls et al. 2021: 8f.). "When the individual becomes a victim, i.e. when they are temporarily or permanently prevented from living according to their wishes or needs, it is always referred to as violence" (Wesuls et al. 2020: 19).

Clients may have experienced violence and/or perpetrated it, i.e. they can be categorised as victims or perpetrators, depending on the context. Often both perspectives, the relationship between them and how they are perceived and classified play a central role in a client's reflection processes. Reappraisal of experiences of violence and/or acts of violence is very important in counselling work carried out in a judicial context, e.g. with former IS fighters, and is closely linked to working on experiences of guilt and shame (→ 7.9).

Acts of violence can give rise to a wide range of feelings in perpetrators, victims and observers, the salient one among perpetrators being that they generally show little empathy for what their victims experience. The ideology of dehumanising others often serves as a protective shield against the feelings that should prevent the person from committing the offence. Perpetrators often describe how they are not really aware of their feelings at the time of the offence, or even deny that their

victims are able to feel. The latter can also be understood as a projection (→ 3.4). They may also cite hatred as the underlying motive for the offence. As a form of targeted aggression, this is one of the many feelings that can manifest themselves in such situations, together with feelings of superiority or inferiority, fear, anxiety, feelings of powerlessness and many others. Feelings are drivers of human behaviour.

Being aware of them is not only crucial for understanding the offence, but above all a way to prevent future acts of violence.

Traumatisation is sometimes linked to violence, as it is largely caused by interpersonal violence in psychosocial contexts (cf. Jegodtka/Luitjens 2016: 25). Statistics show that many of the clients who counsellors work with have been traumatised. Around half of all people have to deal with trauma in their lives, with around a third of them developing a trauma-related disorder (cf. Hanswille/Kissenbeck 2014: 33). People who have grown up experiencing violence within the family, such as mistreatment or sexual abuse, who have fled or been displaced from war zones or who have returned from former IS areas may have witnessed, experienced or even used violence themselves in their lives and/or during their war experiences. They are often so overwhelmed by this that the experiences have a traumatising effect on them.



Trauma and dissociation

Trauma is “a stressful event or situation which the person affected is unable to cope with and process. It is often a response to violence – both physical and psychological. Figuratively, it can be understood as a ‘psychological injury’” (Deutsche Traumastiftung n.d.). A traumatic experience is usually experienced by the individual as life-threatening, making them feel helpless and engendering intense fear. Trauma can affect individuals for the rest of their lives, and takes time to heal. Professional support is often needed to deal with or come to terms with the trauma.

The concept of dissociation is closely linked to the concept of trauma. It refers to the splitting off of the individual’s conscious mind. According to DSM-V⁴⁵, it is the interruption of the normally integrative functions of consciousness, memory, identity or perception of the environment (cf. Stangl 2023). Dissociation can be understood as a defence mechanism which appears during and after the trauma – the greater the traumatic stress, the greater the degree of dissociation required (cf. Hanswille/Kissenbeck 2014: 41).

Indications of dissociative symptoms include the clients appearing unreachable, seeming to stare into space or “drifting

⁴⁵The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is a publication that provides a classificatory system for psychiatric diagnosis. It contains key definitions of and diagnostic guidelines for mental illnesses.

off”. Their voice, speech, facial expressions and gestures may change and they may appear to be a different person. Other signs of dissociation in clients are gaps in memory, a feeling of being outside of their bodies or finding themselves in places and not remembering how they got there. In addition, the client may feel a sensation of pain with no apparent physiological or medical explanation (for more detail cf. Hanswille/Kissenbeck 2014: 41f.; Jegodtka/Luitjens 2016: 92f.).

The client’s attempts to cope with these symptoms can be very challenging for those around them, and therefore potentially also for the counsellor or therapist, who may feel helpless, at a loss or even irritated (cf. Jegodtka/Luitjens 2016: 26). One reason for this may be that trauma and violence do not only affect the individual who is traumatised; the impact on relationship structures and the client’s social environment may also be characterised by powerful, conflictual dynamics.

A basic awareness of violence, trauma and their consequences can help counsellors to recognise important signs during counselling and, if necessary, make a referral for trauma counselling or therapy. Counsellors can also provide low-threshold support themselves and use educational and stabilising methods from trauma pedagogy. They should, however, avoid trauma confrontation approaches, which should only be undertaken in a trauma therapy setting (cf. Hoch 2022: 11; Jegodtka/Luitjens 2016: 27). Excluding trauma from counselling because it is supposedly not the counsellor’s responsibility may not always be feasible, and may make the counselling process more difficult or even lead to the client ending it. Trauma is relevant and always has an influence on the counselling process, and this topic should therefore form part of every counsellor’s practice.

Approaches that have a stabilising effect and make it easier to deal with the consequences of trauma and its symptoms may be helpful here, e.g. imagination and mindfulness exercises (→ 7.3). Exercises such as “The emergency kit”, “Five things” or “The vault exercise” are also useful for counsellors in the case of traumatised clients. With the help of these exercises, counsellors can offer targeted support in dealing with the consequences of trauma, such as dissociation and flashbacks. Identifying and strengthening the client’s resources and stable relationships, e.g. by strengthening their social environment, are also helpful approaches here.

Furthermore, self-harm and suicidal behaviour may also feature in the context of violence and trauma – and this can be ideologically reflected in the concept of martyrdom, among other things. If the counsellor determines that suicidal tendencies, in the form of thoughts or even concrete plans, present an indeterminate or immediate danger, it is crucial for them to be clear about it when speaking with the client. This means clearly stating their suspicions and concerns and, if necessary, also acting to calm the discussion down. The

subject of suicidal tendencies should never be taboo (for a more in-depth treatment of this topic, cf. Bronisch 2014). Scaling questions (→ 6.3) can sometimes be very helpful here, in that they can make the thoughts and/or the specific threat tangible and categorisable. If the client mentions concrete suicide plans, the counsellor should explain that the information will have to be passed on to the appropriate authorities, for the client's protection. At the same time, they can emphasise that they will remain a trusted contact person and, if necessary, can intensify contact by meeting more frequently with the client, for example.

Working with perpetrators: an alternative course of events

Target groups: Index clients 

Time frame: Longer exercise 

Materials: Paper/moderation paper/lining paper as necessary, pens

In order for the client to be able to follow a non-violent path in life, it is important for them to reflect on their own behaviour, train their sense of empathy and work on non-violent conflict resolution strategies and prospects for the future. In psychotherapy, a core element of perpetrators coming to terms with the offences they have committed is often for them to describe their violent acts in detail. This enables them to reflect on their own actions once again, to better understand them as a sequence of events and to more effectively self-regulate in advance in the future. It is therefore recommended that, for the following exercise, counsellors should have basic psychological or pedagogical knowledge of trauma and trauma pedagogy. Violent behaviour can sometimes be the result of an impulsive act. However, such actions are not unpredictable; they are associated with stimuli from the individual's environment and are embedded in a specific context. The ideological justification put forward often serves as a smokescreen for other emotions and motivations. The aim is for the client to better understand their behaviour in retrospect, to recognise their triggers and, on the basis of this knowledge, be able to react differently in the future, i.e. non-violently. The counsellor can use the following exercise to guide and support the client in this. It uses the resources and methods available to the client as a means of preventing them from resorting to violent behaviour, thus protecting the potential victim of the offence and the client themselves.

In the first step, the client describes the offence in detail.⁴⁶ In this way, the beginning and end of the event are precisely determined as well as exactly what happened, and when, between those points. This can start with the morning of the

⁴⁶In contrast to, for example, lawyers or doctors, counsellors generally have no right to refuse to testify (→ 5.3), so careful consideration should be given in each case and it should be made transparent to the client that, in case of doubt, the counsellor, as a witness in court, cannot withhold knowledge of criminal offences for which a final judgment has not yet been handed down. This exercise is therefore most suitable for working on offences where a final judgment has already been made or on acts that have been perpetrated but for which no criminal prosecution has ensued.

day on which the violent offence occurred. The description should be as detailed as possible, i.e. what was said by those involved, and their facial expressions, movements and feelings, should be noted down precisely. The counsellor should record, along a timeline on a sheet of (lining) paper, the chronological sequence of events, actions, movements, looks, utterances and feelings. If necessary, court records or reports on the offence can also be consulted, if available and with the client's consent.



Warning

Depending on the offence, this exercise can be an enormous psychological burden for the client, and also for the counsellor. It is therefore advisable to consider carefully beforehand whether the exercise is suitable for the client and counsellor, i.e. whether there is a risk of re-traumatisation of the client, and whether the counsellor has appropriate support available to them during the process (e.g. supervision and peer consultation). In some cases, it may be better to refer the client to a therapist to work through the offence further.

The second step in the exercise is to reflect on the course of events, looking at the point or points in the process at which the mood changed and turned into violent behaviour. At what point did the perpetrator cease to be able to keep their emotions under control and become violent? What stopped them before that point? Was the final trigger certain words, looks or movements? What thoughts were going through the perpetrator's mind immediately before, during and after the act of violence? What feelings were associated with these thoughts? Counsellors can formulate appropriate questions, such as:

• *"Was violence necessary in this situation?"*

• *"When is violence necessary?"*

• *"Were you having a bad day before this?"*

• *"Could you have prevented the violence?"*

• *"Was the situation difficult for you?"*

• *"What are difficult situations for you?"*

• *"When do you become aggressive?"*

• *"When do you hit out?"*

- “What are the consequences and effects of this?”⁴⁷

Once the counsellor and client have together determined which processes might have been particularly decisive and significant for the course of the offence, an alternative course of events can be constructed based on this. To do this, the counsellor draws a new timeline and goes through it again with the client in detail, for the same situation or the same day. At what point could or should the client have reacted differently or might they have wanted to act differently, in order to avoid violence? Who or what might have helped the client do this? What thoughts, feelings or actions might have been helpful and might have prevented them from committing an act of violence? The counsellor can note these resources on additional cards and attach them at the appropriate point on the timeline.

At the end of the exercise, the counsellor asks the client which ideas and resources they would choose in order to be able to act differently in any future challenging situations. So that the client does not feel overwhelmed, it may be helpful to initially focus on one or two core strategies and keep the other ideas for when they might be needed. The client can take any cards they find helpful with them.

In the shadow of feelings

Target groups: Index clients 

Time frame: Longer exercise 

Materials: Moderation cards, pens

In the exercise “In the shadow of feelings”, the counsellor and client set out to explore the feelings that lie behind, or were experienced during, the offence. The client is asked to list the feelings that drove them to commit the offence or that they experienced while committing it. The client is already aware of the feelings involved, and these therefore form the starting point for further reflection. Feelings often occur not individually, but in pairs or groups. Behind the surface feelings, there are also other feelings that act as drivers and that are not at first consciously felt. For example, a feeling of superiority can hide feelings of insecurity or even inferiority, and hatred can function as a distraction from feelings of fear. The task of the counsellor is therefore to reveal the shadow of the feelings mentioned by the client through targeted questioning and exploration and, if necessary, to locate the hidden drivers.

© The questions are taken from Bärtsch (2011: 102f.) and have been slightly modified.



Example:

Counsellor:	You said that you felt superior at the moment of the offence. What do you attribute this feeling of superiority to?
Client:	I had control over the situation and over him. He couldn't defend himself and couldn't do anything to me.
Counsellor:	He couldn't do anything to you.
Client:	Exactly, he was no longer a threat.
Counsellor:	So you had felt threatened in that situation?
Client:	Well, sort of. I mean, not directly. It was more that I was uncertain.
Counsellor:	So your feeling of superiority is actually hiding in its shadow feelings of insecurity that do not want to be seen.
Client:	I've never thought about that before.
Counsellor:	I see. What would happen if you felt your insecurity?
Client:	Well, I would also appear insecure and I might then become a victim. I know that too well from the past.
Counsellor:	You could become a victim.
Client:	Well, I could be bullied or even beaten up.
Counsellor:	And your sense of superiority protects you from this.
Client:	You could say that.

Not all the feelings named by clients will necessarily conceal other feelings. However, it is worth exploring this with the client, step by step. After the counsellor has revealed the shadows, the feelings that are the driving force can be seen.

The second step is to continue working with these feelings in order to make them more accessible and tangible to the client. Many clients feel cut off from their “shadow” feelings. By asking questions about past situations where the client was able to feel these feelings, the counsellor can often enable them to start accessing them again:

- “When was the last time you felt afraid? What was that like?”
- “How did you know you were unsure? Did you notice it physically, somewhere in your body?”

- *“How did people around you treat you? Did they see you as a whole, including your feelings? Did you receive support? Or did you perhaps experience rejection?”*

It is not uncommon for clients to immerse themselves in the feeling again and experience it during this type of exploration. In these moments, the counsellor should invite the client to pursue this feeling, and show them authentic appreciation. It can also be helpful for the counsellor to discuss their own feelings about what has been described, and thus give the client a better understanding of empathy as being something positive.

Example:

The client describes how he was often alone as a child. The client’s sadness shows in his face, but he tries to suppress it. The counsellor responds to this:

Counsellor: What you have just told me moves me and makes me sad. That lonely boy you were, who was not seen and was all alone. I have the feeling that you feel that, too.

The client is encouraged by the counsellor’s reaction to feel those feelings and access them. If the client is able to accept this and experience the feelings again, they can bring the feelings out of the shadows and into their awareness. This is a crucial step in the client gaining a greater awareness of what they are experiencing before they commit an act of violence in the future. Even if the client is not yet able to feel these feelings directly – which can often be the case – understanding their feelings is an important step towards avoiding destructive behaviour patterns, such as violence, in the future.

In the final step of the exercise, the counsellor should discuss with the client what other ways there might be of dealing with the “shadow” feelings, and which of these the client could choose in the future instead of defaulting to destructive feelings or behaviours. This may enable the client to pay more attention to the actual feelings that drive them, to be more in touch with them and to find a more direct way of dealing with them. Acts of violence, which in a certain sense can be understood as “displacement activities”, can thus be countered with alternative courses of action.



The victim’s story

Target groups: Index clients

Time frame: Session exercise

Materials: Paper, moderation paper/lining paper, pens

People who have committed acts of violence often only tell the story from their perspective. Descriptions from an alternative perspective and which show empathy are rare. Empathy is the greatest check to the use of violence.



Empathy

Empathy is the willingness and ability to recognise, understand and enter into the feelings and thoughts of another person. It also involves reacting appropriately to what one perceives (cf. Luerweg 2022).

Another method for working on violent offences is therefore to focus on a change of perspective, and for the counsellor to work with the client on explicitly examining the offence from the victim’s perspective. The client is asked to put themselves in the role of the victim and describe the offence in as much detail as possible, chronologically and from a first-person perspective (i.e. from the victim’s point of view). In this exercise, it is the counsellor’s responsibility to steer the discussion. This means making sure that the narrative is always from the (detailed) perspective of the person affected, and pointing out if it veers away from this perspective. The counsellor can and should also explicitly ask about feelings throughout the narrative:

- “How does the situation feel to you?”
- “What feelings do you get when you tell me that?”
- “How does that feel?”

In addition, the counsellor can look out for other changes in the client’s behaviour, and address these if necessary. One example is the pace of speech, as the faster people talk about something, the less likely they are to be connecting emotionally with what they are saying. The aim of the exercise is to promote empathy, so the counsellor should always try to support the client’s emotional connection to what they are saying. It may be helpful to have a third person present during the exercise, to write down what is being said on a timeline. The narrative

noted down can then be used again for reflection at a later date. When the client has finished their narration, it is important that they are released from the role. This can be emphasised by a symbolic gesture, e.g. by the client turning around in a circle.

The exercise is followed by a short joint assessment. This should, above all, include the client being given time and space to describe the experience and, if necessary, to share any new impressions or insights they might have. The counsellor should avoid overwhelming the client with questions and expectations, because the exercise often continues to have an effect on the client after the session, and it may take some time for a new understanding of what happened to develop. In subsequent sessions, the counsellor can discuss further with the client how these newly gained insights might change the way they deal with any future violent impulses. Ideally, the client will want to experience the other person's perspective more and to think about the consequences of their actions.

Exercise for anxiety and panic: five things

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Short exercise 

Materials: ---

Although it is to be hoped that the client will not experience dissociation during counselling, it may occur – something may frighten them or they may be confronted with memories or triggers. If this should happen, the counsellor can interrupt it by stopping the dissociation (i.e. by creating a disturbance in the client's world) (cf. Hanswille/Kissenbeck 2014: 42f.). Depending on how the client reacts, such an exercise can sometimes provide additional information about whether referral counselling (e.g. referral to a trauma education or trauma therapy specialist) would be advisable and useful. The interruption can initially take the form of asking the client questions about themselves and the current time and place (cf. Hanswille/Kissenbeck 2014):

- *“What’s your name? What’s my name?”*
- *“What day of the week is it today? What is today’s date?”*
- *“Where are you right now?”*

It may also be helpful for the counsellor to address the client loudly by their name or a false name, or clap their hands together. They could also ask the client to make and maintain eye contact, stand up and stamp their feet or move around (cf. *ibid.*: 43).

A helpful exercise which is very easy to remember and which the counsellor can also use with a client who is suffering from anxiety or panic is to ask them to list what they are experiencing with their different senses. For example:

Tell me:

- “Five things you can see”
- “Four things you can touch”
- “Three things you can hear”
- “Two things you can smell”
- “One thing you can taste”

By focussing the client's attention on their perceptions of the present time and place and on counting, it may be possible to calm and distract them, and lead them out of their dissociation and back to the present.

The exercise is also suitable for clients to use on their own outside of the counselling session. Although dissociation is a protective psychological mechanism, it may also be hazardous for clients, for example if they are driving. Counsellors can encourage clients to incorporate the exercise into their everyday lives to use if they are feeling unsteady or having an anxiety or panic attack; in this way, they will be able to protect themselves from the consequences of dissociation and bring themselves back to the present.

Breathing exercise for anxiety and panic: letting go

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Short exercise

Materials: ---

When a person feels anxiety and panic, it is useful for them to concentrate on their own body and their awareness of it, in order to calm themselves down, gain control of themselves and bring themselves back to the present. Breathing tends to become shallower during anxiety and panic attacks and the muscles of the entire upper body tighten (cf. Hoch 2022: 71). The counsellor can provide guidance to help the client release the tension by encouraging them to follow a conscious breathing exercise. It is helpful if the counsellor performs or

participates in the exercise themselves in order to offer physical support. Here is an example of instructions for the exercise:

- “Sit up straight in a relaxed position.”
- Breathe in deeply and calmly through your nose for about five seconds (the counsellor counts these out).
- Clench your hands into fists.
- Hold your breath for around five seconds – or for as long as feels good for you (the counsellor counts these out).
- Keep your hands clenched while you’re doing this.
- Now breathe the air out gently through your mouth.
- As you breathe out, consciously let your shoulders drop and relax your hands.”

The exercise can be performed several times, if required, with short breaks in between to relax (by shaking out the shoulders, for example). Repeating it several times makes the breathing calmer, shifts the person’s focus and lowers the blood pressure. The pulse slows down and the body and mind are revived (cf. Hoch 2022: 71f.). Clients can also take this simple breathing exercise away with them and incorporate it into their everyday lives as required, for times when they feel anxiety or panic.

The vault exercise

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals 

Time frame: Short exercise

Materials: ---

Imagination exercises (→ 7.5) can be very helpful, especially as part of stabilisation work in dealing with trauma. They involve the client being put into a trance-like state using clear and calming language. Only when this has been achieved does the real work begin. The image of the vault or safe is presented as a place where things that are burdensome can be stored. These may be specific experiences, memories, feelings or spiralling thoughts that are associated with negative feelings or behaviours, such as aggression towards oneself or others. The vault should be large and accessible for the client and their inner helpers, and possibly fitted with shelves, drawers or crates to allow the contents to be sorted and stored. It can also be secured with one or more

locks, if required. The client can include anything that helps to make the imaginary vault feel secure and functional. When the description has been completed, the client is asked whether the vault is completely secure and whether anything else is needed. Examples of guiding questions that could be used:

- “Describe the vault: what does it look like on the inside?”
- “How can you sort and store objects and thoughts that you want to deposit here?”
- “How is your vault secured? Is there anything else you need to make your vault completely secure?”

The counsellor can invite the client to put things in the safe which they want to distance themselves from, or over which they want to gain control. This is not about destroying any memories, feelings, thoughts, images or dreams, but rather about the client gaining control over their experiences, memories, feelings and actions through distancing themselves. For example, memories can be stored as image sequences on DVDs (the client does not have to watch them again in the process) and individual images as photographs. The client can also write down their thoughts in their imagination, and store feelings or pain in the form of a symbol (e.g. a stone to represent fear, a bandage for pain) (cf. Hanswille/Kissenbeck 2014: 52 and 327f.). The client can access the vault as required and integrate it into their life if it proves to be helpful.

Ambivalence and Decisions

Decisions shape our entire lives and, similarly, the counselling process. Each time a client attends a counselling session, they make a fresh decision to enter into a relationship with their counsellor, to continue working on themselves and to seek support. Furthermore, the counselling process itself can be understood as an overarching decision-making process in which clients consider, among other things, whether or not they want to continue to be part of an extremist community. Such decision-making processes are characterised by the many voices in our heads, which the psychologist Friedemann Schulz von Thun describes as parts of our inner self in his

standard reference work *Miteinander reden: 3. Das innere Team und situationsgerechte Kommunikation* [Talking to each other: 3. The inner team and situation-appropriate communication] (Schulz von Thun 1998). In conflict-laden situations, these parts of our self wrestle and argue with each other, and ideally find a compromise as a team, which is then articulated as a decision. However, if the inner parts cannot come to an agreement, the client may be unable to commit to an option or position and may experience inner turmoil.

The complexity and contradictions in this can often lead to ambivalence on the part of the client. Dealing with ambivalence is probably one of the biggest challenges, especially when working with those wishing to exit extremism. Rarely does a client sit in front of the counsellor and clearly state from the outset their intention to seek support for a distancing or exit process. In practice, the catalysts for these exit processes are more often external events and influences, such as a prison sentence, a death or the birth of a child and the client's resulting role as a parent. These turning points in the life of a radicalised individual can often give rise to feelings of ambivalence, which may lead them to question their previous life path and aspects of their ideology and/or community. Ambivalence in the client can be understood to be a positive sign, as it indicates that they are holding two differing views simultaneously, which is creating an inner tension in them. The challenge of dealing with this tension may in itself be the decisive factor in the client initiating the first change processes (cf. Miller/Rollnick 2015: 187). Counselling processes aim to identify these inner tensions and ambivalences, and reinforce the client's desire for a solution and change. Motivational interviewing seeks to promote change talk in this context (→ 6.3).

Counselling thus supports the client's previous, active reflection process, clarifies the initial situations and needs, opens up (new) resources and, not least, creates scope for action. However, in order to be able to make decisions, it may be necessary for the client not only to understand their needs and resources, but also to be able to look ahead and handle the objective and, above all, the emotional consequences of these needs and resources. Ultimately, every decision-making process is determined by the rational and emotional parts of the individual. Whether these are balanced or one aspect is dominant in decision-making varies depending on the client (and the counsellor). Some people prefer to think things through logically, and put their feelings to one side, while others may make decisions based more on their gut feelings.

In addition to the primary focus of the counselling process, the question of distancing and leaving, clients are also repeatedly confronted in the course of counselling with what seem to be minor decision-making issues. These may, however, be as stressful for them to deal with and can also shape the course of their future lives. For example, during the counselling and personal development process, the client may reach the point where they start to question their current relationships or their friendships

(with people from the radicalised environment), and express the first tentative intentions to separate from them or break off contact. They may then raise this uncertainty that they feel as a topic for discussion in the counselling session and ask for help in making a decision. Or the client may be questioning whether a particular apprenticeship or job offer is right for them, and ask to discuss it with the counsellor, because they cannot or do not want to make a decision themselves. If the client asks the counsellor to take a clear position on the subject, it is clear that relinquishing responsibility for their own actions and lives is almost a reflex action for them. However, counsellors should not comply with this request, as it is a key prerequisite for a successful distancing and exit process that the client takes responsibility for their own actions. If this step is bypassed, the client may continue to attach themselves to perceived authority figures and therefore remain susceptible to approaches by extremist groups. When supporting clients in decision-making issues, the principle should therefore always be that the counsellor's role is to promote their self-empowerment. Various methods of reflection are available, ranging from more rational approaches to a pros and cons list, and on to more feelings-orientated approaches such as decision lines, working with parts of the inner self or the tetralemma method. For a positive approach to ambivalence, exercises that specifically promote an open and positive mindset (e.g. creating a "yes" mood or "anchoring a positive mood") can also help. These exercises have already been tried and tested in other counselling contexts, including addiction counselling, and provide a good starting point, offering great potential for exit counselling.

Pros and cons list

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper, pens, template (→12.7)

Making a list of pros and cons is probably one of the best-known decision-making tools and can also be used in the counselling process. There are several different versions. The simplest is to draw a table with two columns, and write down the arguments for two possible answers for a specific question. This variant can be insufficient, however, as it may not be sufficiently nuanced and the result may not be very convincing for the client. So, even with an apparently simple method such as this, there are many aspects to be considered if it is to be a viable decision-making tool for clients.

In the counselling process, it is therefore advisable to use more complex versions, which assign additional values (Value) and probabilities (Probability) to the arguments, e.g. with the help of scaling (→ 6.3).

Question: should I accept the apprenticeship at the supermarket?							
PROs (YES)	Rating	Probability	Total	CONs (NO)	Rating	Probability	Total
"I'll finally be earning my own money and will be able to afford a flat."	8	8	64	"I'll have less time to study the Qur'an or meet up with friends."	5	6	30
"I'll finally have a job/occupation again and career prospects."	8	6	48	"I'll come into contact with alcohol and pork, and that's a sin."	7	5	35
...				"I might experience racial discrimination from my colleagues."	8	5	40
Total value	/	/	112	Total value	/	/	105

Table 6: Pros and cons list - an example

However, the question to be asked needs to be formulated before the client looks at the arguments. The question should be posed in such a way that there are only two clearly distinguishable options for action, and therefore answers (closed question, reference). So a "yes/no" question is generally used. However, the question sometimes requires up to four options for action. The method described here can also be used for this purpose, but all the answer options must be clearly stated in the table beforehand. For example, the client could use the method to clarify where they would like to live in the future.

Question: where do I want to live with my family in the future?											
Hamburg	Rating	Probability	Total	Berlin	Rating	Probability	Total	Ankara	Rating	Probability	Total
"I'll be able to see my parents often here."	8	10	80	"I'll have career prospects here."	7	9	63	"I can live a more Muslim life here."	8	8	64
...				...				...			
Total value	/	/		Total value	/	/		Total value	/	/	

Table 7: Table for decision-making - an example

Once the right formulation for the question has been decided on, a list of all the supporting arguments in favour of the various options for action is compiled with the client. As it can be difficult to think of all the arguments on the spot, it is useful to ask the client to collect the arguments as a "homework" assignment. They can then take their time and be encouraged to complete the table with their friends or family members. Scaling questions (→ 6.3) can then be used to assign values and probabilities to the arguments. The more important an argument is to the client and the more realistic it is deemed to be in reality, the higher it is rated in the corresponding columns. Working with a scale of one to ten is recommended, so that differentiated positions can be clearly seen. For example, in the table above, the client considers contact with their parents to be very important and gives it a rating of eight. If the client stays in Hamburg, it is very likely that they can visit or see their parents often, due to the short distance involved if the parents also live in the city. In the probability column, the argument is therefore also given a high value (ten). If both numbers are now multiplied together, the result is a total value for the argument. In this approach, the collected arguments are more than a purely quantitative list and relate more to the client's level of need. At the same time,

a clear numerical value is obtained, which makes the result clearer to see. When the total values for all the arguments are added together at the end, the action option with the highest combined total is the one that the client should theoretically choose. However, there are often clear indications as to whether this feels like the right decision to the client. If the client is disappointed or hesitant, or attempts to evaluate the arguments differently afterwards, it can be an unmistakable sign that, emotionally, the client wants to make or has already made a different decision. This should then be discussed openly in the counselling session, as an individual can only feel true conviction and the motivation to take a particular decision when it "feels right", and not when it is merely based on numerical values.

Decision lines

Target groups: Index clients, relatives

Time frame: Session exercise

Materials: Lengths of rope, moderation cards, a large, evenly lit room

Decision lines are a modified version of the “river of life” method (→ 7.5). Unlike the original version, however, the focus of the work is not on the past but on the future, various options for which are depicted. The exercise requires a room or space large enough that the client can literally “walk through” the decisions that are laid out. The starting point of the work is the present time, which should be represented in the room by a symbol, e.g. a stone, chair or flower. From this symbol, a wide variety of decision paths open up for the client, and these are laid out on the floor using lengths of rope. The counsellor should also consider the atmosphere and lighting in the room, as these can have a strong subconscious influence on the client’s decisions. For example, if one path leads to a bright window and the other to a dark, untidy corner, the client may automatically feel less favourable towards the latter. To avoid this, it is therefore advisable that the paths should run in the same direction and slightly angled away from each other, rather than at a 180° angle.

The second step is to discuss with the client which of the paths should represent which decision, and these should be clearly marked. For example, one path (option 1) could represent the client’s separation from their partner, while the other represents the continuation of the relationship. The counsellor and client should then discuss what future time frame the client would like to set for the implementation of the decision and for its consequences to become apparent. It is useful to mark several specific future points, e.g. three and six months hence, and one or two years hence, or similar. It is important not to attempt to look too far ahead, as the potential consequences of the decision would then be increasingly influenced by other situations in the client’s life, making it more difficult to link them back to the current issue. But neither should the time intervals be too short. No more than five specific points in time should be included, otherwise, in subsequent reflection on the consequences of the decision, there may be too much duplication and insufficient new input.

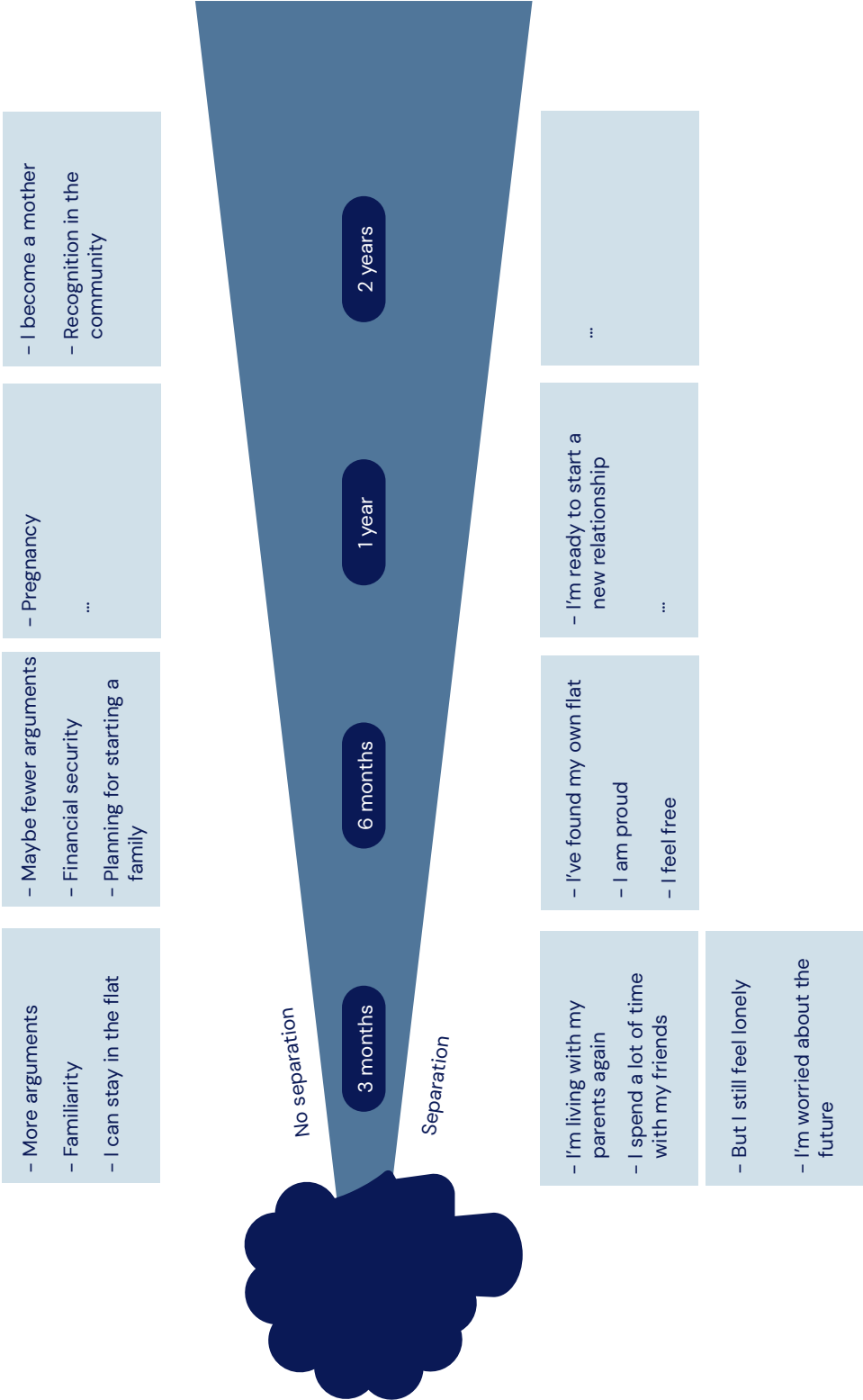


Fig. 25: Decision lines - an example

Once these points have been established, the counsellor and client can start the exercise together. The client must now decide which potential future path they would like to work on first. Starting from the present, they then walk along the corresponding rope line. The counsellor can walk alongside them and provide support, if necessary. At each predetermined point in time, the counsellor prompts the client to reflect, by, for example, asking questions about how their life has developed thus far and the feelings associated with this (→ 7.2). The counsellor writes down the main points in the client's predicted future life and the associated feelings on moderation cards and places them on the floor in the appropriate location.

Example (possible questions for Option 1: separation from partner)

- *"You've been separated from your boyfriend/partner for three months now. Can you describe to me what your life is like now? Where are you living? etc."*
- *"How did your friends and family react to the decision?"*
- *"Who is helping you get over the separation? How do you deal with your sadness? Do you feel any? Do you feel lonely – or maybe even liberated?"*
- *"How is your relationship with your ex-boyfriend/ex-partner now? How is it when you meet him in your community? What do you feel then? etc."*

Once the client feels that they have identified the most important points, they move on to the next point in the future, where they undertake a similar reflection. Their key statements and feelings are again noted on moderation cards. At the last fixed point on the path, the client is asked to look back and review the entire process.

Once this is done, the client leaves that decision line and begins again at the starting point, the present. The process now begins again with the second potential path. Important consequences of the decision are once more discussed, reflected upon and, not least, linked to the client's feelings. Once this second process has been completed, the actual decision-making process begins for the client. This does not necessarily have to be carried out in the counselling session. Many clients want to let what they have just experienced sink in and then decide on a course of action later. Carrying out this conscious analysis of potential future paths thus enables many clients to make the decision for themselves.

The inner team

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Moderation cards, possibly a flipchart, a large room, a system board

As already mentioned, the "inner team" exercise was devised by Schulz von Thun. He described the individual's struggle to make decisions as an inner turmoil in which several parts of the inner self fight and disable each other in the midst of inner confusion and conflict, even to the point of an internal civil war. The aim of counselling is to turn this fragmented and often opaque cluster of parts into a team that works together cooperatively (cf. Schulz von Thun 2021: 24ff.). However, before teamwork can be considered, the first step of the method is to allow the inner parts of the client's self to be seen and felt, as many of these are often subconscious. They work in secret and can sometimes block decision-making processes.

As an introduction to exploring these parts of the client's inner self, it is helpful for the counsellor to ask the client the following questions: *what stirs or moves in you when you think about the decision? Is there a voice that speaks up?* Some clients respond to this by mentioning physical reactions: stomach pains, heavy legs or a heavy heart. Schulz von Thun advises that the counsellor should then focus on this feeling, and address this part of the client's inner self directly by asking questions. For example: *who or what is kicking you in the stomach and does it or they have a name?* This may result in the first inner part of the client being revealed, which can then be drawn on a flipchart or similar (see Fig. 26) (cf. Schulz von Thun 2021: 16).

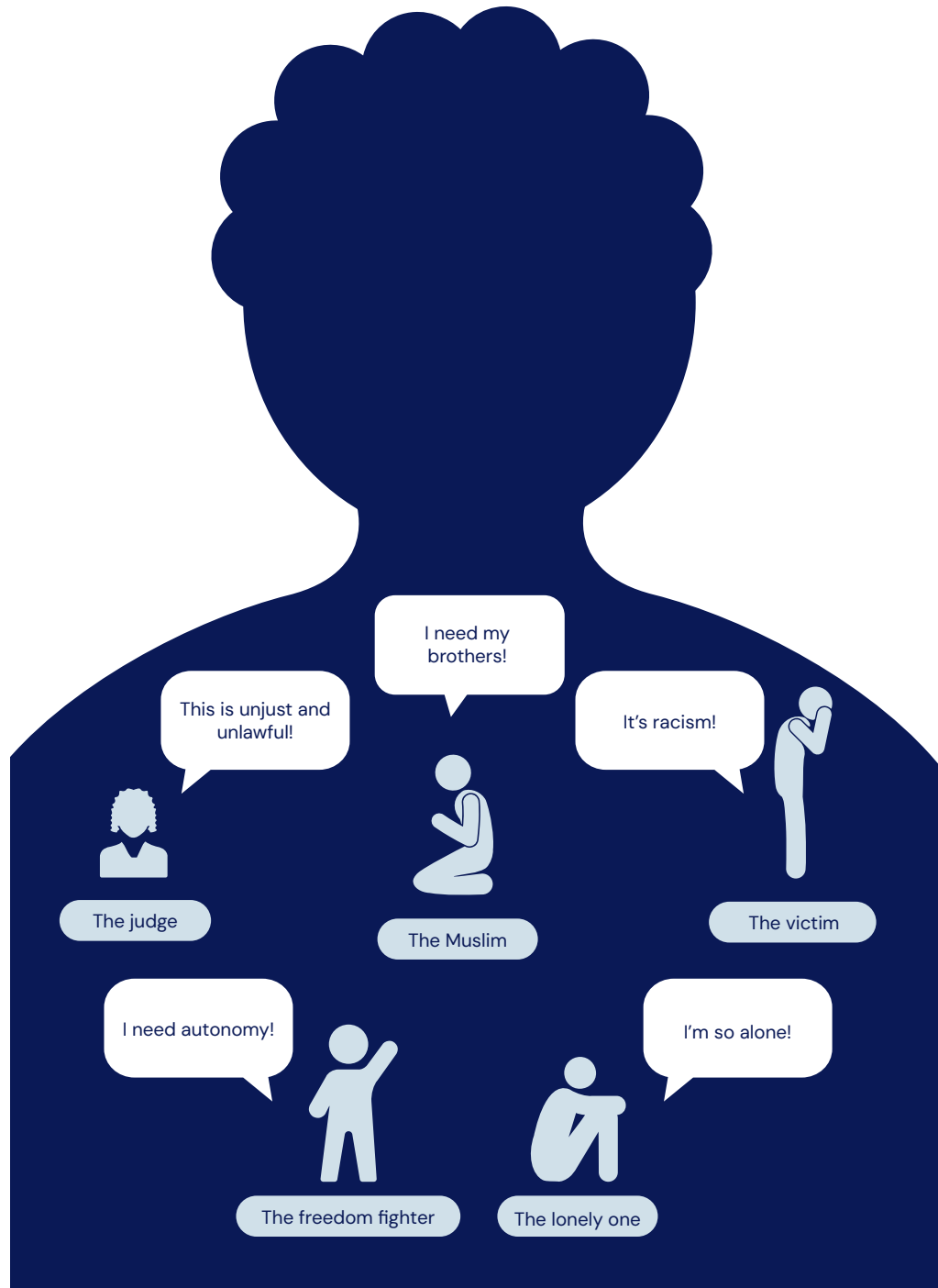


Fig. 26: The inner team - an example

**Example:**

Counsellor:	How did you feel when the court judgment forbade you having contact with your fellow believers?
Client:	I was pretty angry. It felt like a punch in the stomach. What rights do they have over me? I'm not going to let them tell me who I talk to. But to be honest, I was also a bit sad ... and confused. I also felt relieved.
Counsellor:	It almost sounds as if there are several voices inside of you.
Client:	Yes, there are quite a few voices. And they all shout out in a jumble. That's why I don't know yet whether I'll stick to the judgment.
Counsellor:	Oh, that's pretty normal with the voices. I think everyone has experienced that at some point. And in your case it's even easier to understand. After all, the court case has been quite a stressful and probably upsetting time for you. Do you feel like taking a closer look with me at which voices are speaking out of your mouth right now?
Client:	Okay.
Counsellor:	Okay. What part of you would you like to start with? The angry one or the relieved one?
Client:	The angry one.
Counsellor:	Good. I understood from what he said that he thinks it's stupid that someone else is telling him who he can and can't have contact with. Can you step into that part of yourself and tell me what the part feels and wants to tell me?
Client:	Oh yes, he says ...
Counsellor:	Can you speak in the first person, please? After all, you're in that role now.
Client:	I think it's a cheek that this judge, this woman, treats me like this and dictates to me! She's not my mother! And even my mother wouldn't do this. But I don't know, maybe I deserved it somehow ...
Counsellor:	At the end there, it wasn't the angry part that was speaking, but a different part. We'll have a look at that later, but let's stay with the angry part for now. What else do they say?
Client:	That I won't be constrained ... by anyone!

Counsellor:	Ah, this angry part insists on its freedom.
Client:	Yes, exactly. I want to make my own decisions – it's my life!
Counsellor:	Okay. Can you think of a name for this part?
Client:	Mr Angry!
Counsellor:	That's an idea. But can you think of another name that better reflects his true nature and concerns? What specifically does he want, what does he wish for?
Client:	Hmm ... then perhaps "The freedom fighter".
Counsellor:	Sounds very appropriate to me. Let's use that name.

The counsellor and client can approach the other inner parts of the client in the same way, by asking questions and discussing them. The results can then be recorded on a flipchart. In the above example, an anxious or worried part could emerge, as well as a wishful part that hopes for a bright future or a team player for whom belonging to the group is important. However, it must be pointed out that some clients find this structured approach difficult. They can barely differentiate between the parts of their inner self, even in conversation, and keep jumping between the different voices. In such cases, it is recommended that the counsellor first lets the client express all the statements and thoughts whizzing around in their head regarding the potential decision. The counsellor should note down all these statements on index cards, so that they can be placed in groups later, with each of the resulting groups being given a name that reflects the respective inner part. This ensures that all the parts are recognised. This process requires a great deal of empathy from the counsellor, as well as impartial appreciation of all the parts of the client and an ability to summarise the points. A first-level structure then emerges which reveals all the parts of the client's inner self in relation to the particular decision or life situation (see Fig. 26). Hidden parts are thus revealed, and this can help the client to access decision-making information and be better able to reach a decision.

However, this first-level structure is not yet a team. It is often a fragmented, opaque cluster in which some parts may form alliances with other parts, and there are ringleaders, enmities, etc. The second step therefore aims to reveal these structures. The counsellor and client now position the inner parts of the client in relation to each other, e.g. on a family system board or on the floor of the counselling room using anchors (cushions, chairs, other objects). The inner parts are to be regarded as autonomous persons. Parts that represent similar goals or views are positioned closer to each other, while conflicting parts are

further apart. Schulz von Thun describes the result as a second-level structure in which the inner relationships are revealed.

This can now be used for the third step. It often becomes clear which parts are key for the current decision and which should play a greater part in the discussion. As in constellation work (→ 7.4), it is now possible to explore the individual parts. Role plays can be staged, the parts brought into the dialogue and new approaches to the decision revealed by asking circular questions (cf. Schulz von Thun 2021: 24). It can be useful to give the client this dialogue work as a "homework" assignment. The client could, for example, write (chain) letters relating to the issue between the relevant inner parts (the ringleaders). Part A would thus communicate its position and the underlying needs and experiences to part B in a letter. The latter could in turn reply to this or – if other inner parts are included in the dialogue – send its letter to a third part, C, in which part B should also refer to the contents of part A's letter.

This creates an inner dialogue within the client and forms an inner team which strives to find a clear common position. Even if this is not achieved, many clients still find this exercise beneficial. Understanding the different inner voices often gives the client a measure of clarity and reassurance, in which the inner plurality of positions can be appreciated and recognised. This may in turn lead the client to conclude that making a decision is no longer so urgent – or perhaps even more urgent. In many cases, however, the client tends to work on the topic, more or less consciously, without receiving direct counselling on it, and this helps them to find a solution over a period of time (cf. Schulz von Thun 2021: 26).

Tetralemma

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Moderation cards, flipchart, large room, system board

The tetralemma is a structure from classical Indian philosophy and law. This logical way of thinking served to depict the possibilities which judges used to proceed in disputes and ultimately decide between or about two parties. They could rule in favour of one or the other person, or both, or decide against both plaintiffs. In addition to these, a fifth possibility has been introduced in systemic counselling work, which can be described as "none of these and not even that" and represents a negation of the tetralemma itself. Some books therefore refer to the "negated tetralemma" (cf. von Kibéd/Sparrer 2020: 77; Kleve 2011: 118ff.). What this means is excluding all the options presented, including the excluding of all the options itself, in

order to maximise delimitation.

Implementation of the tetralemma often takes the form of a structural constellation or a walk taken by the client. It can be very useful in cases where the client feels they can only choose (or, rather, cannot choose) between two options. The key belief underpinning the concept of the counsellor taking a walk with the client is firstly that decisions are in part made subconsciously, assisted by our memory of emotional experiences, and are then revealed in physical signals or “somatic markers”. “The felt bodily impulses can also be viewed as ‘affects’ or ‘felt senses’, as described in the work of Eugene T. Gendlin and Rainer Sachse, which are indicators of the client’s motive system. On this view, discomfort or tension signals that an imagined situation is incompatible with the client’s needs and motives” (Fritzsche 2012). Another aim of the tetralemma is to give the client a broader perspective in relation to ambivalence, and thus generate further options for action that have not yet been explored.

For the tetralemma exercise, a room with sufficient space and five moderation cards are required. These cards should all be of the same size and ideally large enough for a person to be able to stand on one of them. The moderation cards should be labelled with the words “The one”, “The other”, “Both”, “Neither” and “None of these and not even that”, and positioned in the room as shown in the example (see Fig. 27). There should be a distance of at least 1.5 metres between the cards to facilitate the client having a physical reaction when differentiating between the various positions.

To start the exercise, the client stands at the first position (“The one”) and states the corresponding point or option. The counsellor then asks the client some questions about this point. It is important that the questions do not only relate to the content of the point of view, but also guide the client towards perceiving their bodily impulses. In addition to questions such as, “What is this position – the point of view or the option? Is there anything else that should be here? Is there anything else that needs to be considered with ‘The one’?”, the counsellor should also enquire about the client’s physical sensations. For example:

“When you stand on the card representing ‘The one’, what physical sensations and feelings do you have? Where in your body can you feel them most strongly? How would you assess these perceptions and feelings – are they pleasant? Unpleasant? Do they make you want to move?”

During this discussion, the counsellor can also draw attention to anything else they perceive. For example, if the client smiles or is standing hunched over, looking exhausted, this can certainly be mentioned (→ 6.3). The counsellor should only touch upon observations which represent a change in the client from their

usual behaviour and can therefore be attributed to the exercise. When the client feels they have got in touch with this point sufficiently and experienced their feelings, they leave the card and move to the second position (“The other”). As with the first position, the client clearly states and describes this option and is then asked about the specific aspects of this position. The physical signals that the client gives while relaying the information are also important in this case:

“Does your body language change when you identify with this point? Do you get other feelings? What are they? Does what you feel in your body confirm what you’ve said, or even reinforce it, or do you feel a resistance to it?” (cf. Kleve 2011: 127f.).

Once the client, supported by the counsellor, has formed a comprehensive picture, the client’s walk continues to the third position (“Both”). Many clients find this the most confusing position, and one that they have not yet been able to imagine or explain. The task of the counsellor is now to open up a new perspective with the client that might make this option a possibility. Von Kibéd and Sparrer (2020: 78ff.) name 13 possible options for realising this position, including compromises, pseudo-contradictions, shifts in theses and premises, and contextual separations. However, it is recommended that the counsellor first explore this concept with the client, rather than immediately starting to think through all the options. It often becomes clear at this point whether this option would be suitable for this particular client. If the client shows a positive inclination towards the option, the counsellor should attempt to gently explore this option, using the following script as a basis, for example:

“When you stand at this position now and look at ‘The one’ and ‘The other’ cards, what feelings do you get? How does your posture change? If you get positive feelings, how do you explain this? Are you imagining how the two might be combined? If you can’t think of anything concrete in regard to this, we could just imagine that it’s possible. How would you know that both positions had been realised? Who else would recognise that? What would be different then? As we are talking so much about this option now, is it becoming more tangible for you? Do you perhaps want to accept this option?” (cf. Kleve 2011: 129; Fritzsche 2012).

The client then goes to the “Neither” position, where they are asked to explicitly avoid looking at the “The one” and “The other” option cards. The client and counsellor together explore the background to the decision options:

"If you look away from the ambivalence and think about what this decision between the options will affect, what it will cause to happen and what it has possibly even already caused for you, what thoughts come into your head? What is your inner conflict really about? Do any experiences and feelings come to mind? Would you like to tell me about them? How do you perceive your body when we talk about it?" (cf. Fritzsche 2012.).

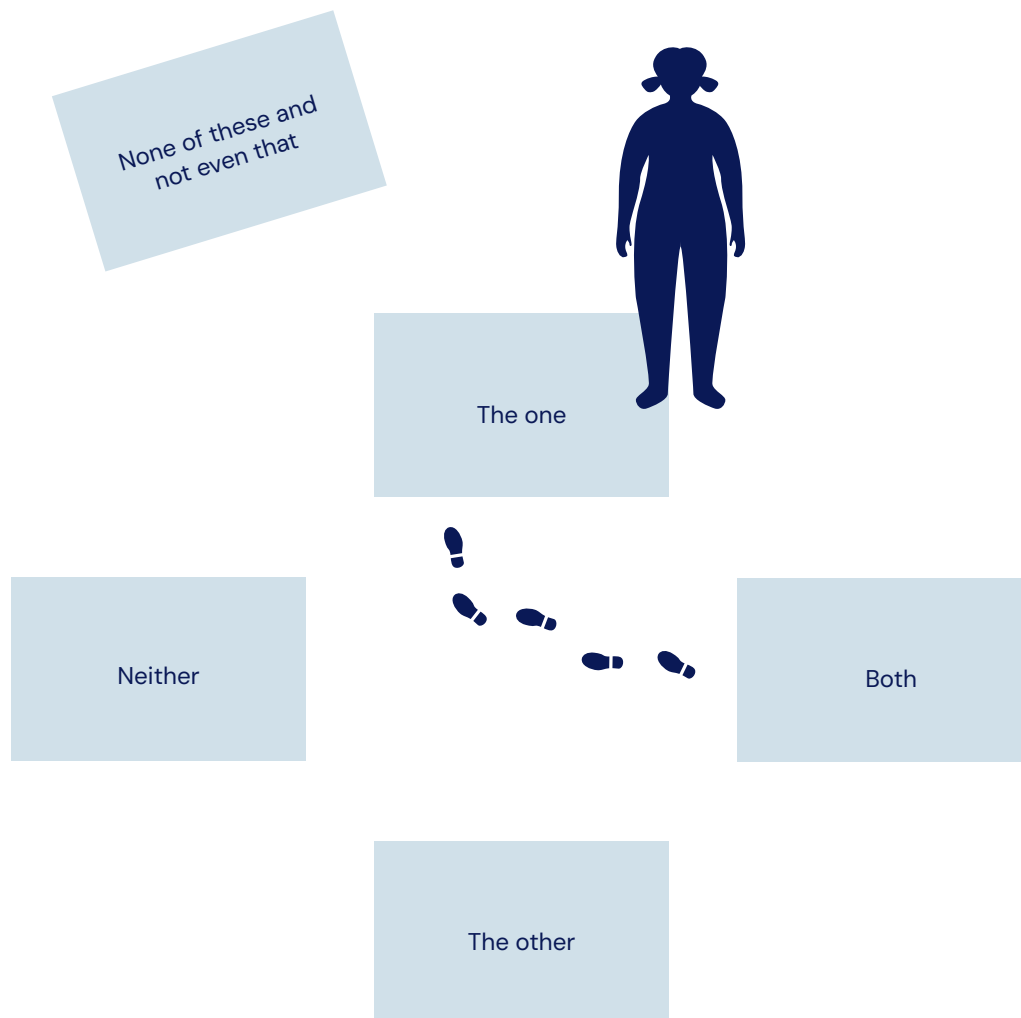


Fig. 27: The tetralemma

The last move in the walk is to the position of "None of these and not even that". This card acts as a "joker". It is deliberately positioned outside the tetrahedron formed by the other cards so that the client can see their scope for decision-making from above. It is useful here to focus again on the client's physical signals and feelings first. If clients have positive feelings, they often make time for and share hitherto unmentioned points, options or things they imagine (cf. *ibid.*). However, if nothing occurs to them, the first part of the exercise can be concluded at this point and the client can step out of the area marked out with cards.

The counsellor should then have an evaluative discussion with the client. Physical reactions and feelings in particular should be discussed, as this exercise is often used when the client has run through all the options in their mind several times and still not found a solution. Questions to accompany this process might include:

- At which position (option) did the client feel most comfortable? How did they identify this?
- Has this exercise changed anything in the client's decision-making process?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how ready is the client to make a decision, if 1 represents "Not at all" and 10 "Immediately"? What steps still need to be taken before a decision is made?

The method can be a helpful (emotions-based) decision-making tool if the counsellor and client take the time to discuss this.

"Yes" mood

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals

Time frame: Short exercise

Materials: ---

It can initially be very unsettling for clients if they experience cognitive openings in the form of inner ambivalences and contradictions. There are various ways in which counsellors can support clients to (better) cope with these ambivalences and to deal with them constructively. It is often an inability to deal with ambiguity that leads clients to favour radical or extremist ideologies in the first place. However, there are also contradictions which cannot be attributed solely to a lack of ambiguity competence,⁴⁸ but which indicate social inequalities. These social inequalities are generally difficult to tolerate and

⁴⁸ Ambiguity competence is the ability to recognise, understand and constructively deal with ambiguity, heterogeneity and uncertainty, and to be able to act in different, sometimes conflicting roles.

can be a key factor when dealing with contradictions and ambivalences in the context of counselling and the topics discussed here. Because ultimately, it is the contradictions found within a democratic system that may threaten it if they cannot be categorised and reflected upon. A system in which all people supposedly have the same civil rights and liberties can become an almost insoluble contradiction for people who are affected by discrimination – for example, if they repeatedly experience marginalisation and disregard (→ 7.6). This is why it is important for counsellors to deal sensitively and carefully with contradictions and ambivalences in order to assess their significance for (impending) radicalisation and to work through, reflect on and classify them within a trusting working relationship, so that, for example, (new) ways of dealing with them can be found.

Counsellors working with children or young people from Islamist or Salafist-influenced family contexts also face a special set of circumstances. Here, too, contradictions and conflicts of loyalty often play a considerable role (cf. Becker/Meilicke 2019a; 2019b). For the individual, detaching themselves from the ideology and/or community is often synonymous with detachment from (parts of) their own family (cf. Becker et al. 2020: 29), and is therefore particularly challenging. Counsellors can provide step-by-step support to help clients fulfil their own wishes for change.

If ambivalences or conflictual situations arise, it can be very challenging to have a positive discussion. A simple method can help here by creating a “yes” mood. This exercise or intervention promotes a positive mood within the counselling setting, in which clients are more inclined to engage with the counsellor and to feel involved (cf. Caby/Caby 2017b: 68). In this exercise, the counsellor makes statements or asks questions that can only be answered in the affirmative or that the counsellor already knows the answer to. As the counsellor gains in experience, they can use approaches such as this intuitively, so that the questions are woven into the discussion without the counsellor consciously thinking about them.

The following are some examples:⁴⁹

- “You’ve been waiting a long time for this appointment!”
- “You’ve already done a lot to solve the problem!”
- “You’ve been very patient!”
- “You have two other children?”
- “You called the other day?”
- “So you’ve decided to find a solution to your problems.”

©Example questions are taken from Caby/Caby 2017b: 68.

Anchoring a positive mood

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals 

Time frame: Short exercise or “homework” 

Materials: Paper, coloured pens

It can often be the case that clients have a desire for change but feel ambivalent about it, perhaps because they are afraid of it or do not really trust themselves to take action. For example, it may be difficult for an index client to enter into an open dialogue with their parents about the (real) reasons behind their planning to leave the country or actually doing so, although this may be necessary in order to free themselves from this part of their past and proactively initiate changes in their relationship with their parents. Or a professional supporting an index client may wish to have an open conversation with them about their concerns regarding (suspected) radicalisation, but at the same time be worried about the client breaking off contact. Inner voices and parts of the inner self all have their own reasons and justifications (→ 7.11). Nevertheless, it can help to focus on creating a positive mood when clients are making decisions and want to proactively implement changes.

To do this, the counsellor can ask the client to think of a sentence that describes what they intend to do, e.g. “I can do it” or “I’m brave” (Caby/Caby 2017b: 105). The client then writes the sentence on a piece of paper as many times as possible in different colours, possibly as a “homework” assignment. Another option is for the client to write the sentence with their non-dominant hand (i.e. their left hand, if they are right-handed), as “This links the undertaking with other areas of the brain and stabilises it” (Caby/Caby 2017b: 105).



Example:

Counsellor: You’ve worked on the background to your departure to Syria with me in the last few sessions, and I am very impressed by how clear you are about your motives then, and how much you are able to understand and reflect on them. What needs to happen now to help you to better come to terms with this part of your past, as you would like to do?

Client: It would actually be important for me to talk to my parents about it again. They still don’t understand it. And the whole story of how things were going so badly at home back then had a lot to do with my leaving the country. I actually wish I could tell them that. But I’m also afraid that they’ll then blame themselves for everything. And I don’t want that. But I don’t want there to be so many arguments at home in the future. That’s why I want to

	explain it to them. I just don't know if I can do that yet.
Counsellor:	Your inner voices that are telling you to have the conversation with them are just as valid as your worries about it. I have an idea. Our brain learns, not just by talking, but also by doing. Would you like to try something completely different to the usual exercises, and put your brain and yourself in the right mood for tackling this task and having that conversation with your parents?
Client:	Mmm, sounds quite interesting. But it depends – what is it you're suggesting?
Counsellor:	Which sentence best describes your intention to explain your thoughts to your parents and talk to them about the past? A sentence that might also encourage you?
Client:	Mmm, maybe something like "It'll be worth it; I can do it."
Counsellor:	That sounds great. That's actually two sentences. Those are sentences you can really believe in. To memorise them, I would ask that you write them on an A4 sheet of paper in different colours, until the sheet is full. You could also try writing every third sentence with your left hand. It's been shown that this can help to consolidate the courage and optimism that you put into this sentence in the brain. And that could also help in a real conversation. We could talk about what this exercise felt like for you at the next session. And then you could think again about whether you want to go ahead with the conversation. What do you think?
Client:	Sounds a bit crazy, but why not? It also takes the pressure off me to have the conversation straight away. I'll try it.

Gender Roles

While in English there is a distinction between a person's sex (biological/anatomical) and gender (social), in German both are included in the term *Geschlecht*. This encompasses a person's biological sex, gender expression and gender identity. The latter is the equivalent of *gender* in English – the social gender – and describes the gender to which the individual feels they belong. This may be the same as the biological sex assigned at birth on the basis of anatomy or (partially) deviate from it. A person's gender expression is how they present themselves to the world,

⑤ Enculturation and socialisation processes refer to the development of the individual in interaction with their (social) environment and culture.

⑥ Intersectionality describes the interaction of multiple mechanisms of oppression.

⑦ Marginalisation factors determine a social process in which disadvantaged population groups are denied participation in social, cultural and economic life due to specific characteristics.

i.e. through their appearance, clothing and language, among other things. This is usually positioned within the societal premises of masculinity and femininity. However, a person's gender expression does not necessarily have to be the same as their gender identity (cf. Büro zur Umsetzung von Gleichbehandlung e. V. 2021: 3).

Our ideas of gender are shaped by enculturation and socialisation processes,⁵⁰ which are shaped by our socio-cultural contexts and societal power discourses. The resulting values and norms are expressed in our thoughts, feelings and actions, both in relation to our own gender identity and that of others (cf. Abdul-Hussain 2012: 46f.). Viewed through an intersectional lens,⁵¹ marginalisation factors⁵² also have an influence on how gender roles are perceived. With regard to Muslims, there are problematic positionings that, for example, locate a patriarchal, if not violent, relationship between men and women in their religion. In the context of sexualised violence in public, Muslim (-coded) men are more frequently portrayed as a threat, as it is deemed that they lack the ability to exercise self-control (cf. Kulaçatan 2020: 121; Gold et al. 2021: 40).

Islamist propaganda deliberately picks up on these gender roles and stereotypes, and creates counter-offers that are simple and contradiction-free. These include a biologicistic, conservative understanding of gender, based on a binary and heteronormative distribution of roles. This can be a very appealing prospect for young people, as it clearly defines tasks and options for action: men are responsible for life in the outside world – e.g. paid employment – while women are responsible for life inside the home – e.g. bringing up the children and running the household. Even if at first glance this may seem paradoxical in an emancipated society, it can provide relief. Girls and young women learn early on in the course of their socialisation that it is not always possible to reconcile paid employment with caring responsibilities and that the decision to become a mother can have negative consequences for their professional career. To counter this, the role of the mother in Islamist circles is particularly emphasised and honoured with an extraordinary appreciation that is often lacking in society as a whole. This narrative is based on the image of the mother in Islam, but is publicised frequently and intensely in Islamist propaganda.

Strict rules apply equally to men and women and this is represented as equality in Islamist propaganda. This is particularly evident in the representation of sexuality and gender; for both men and women, there are specific codes of behaviour and dress they must adhere to in order to be considered a "true Muslim man" or a "true Muslim woman" within the community. For young women who have grown up with traditional gender roles and have experienced how men and especially male members of the family receive preferential treatment, the gender relations in religiously motivated extremism can be perceived as offering

emancipation. For example, female clients talk about how they found it unfair that their brothers were able to have girlfriends when they were teenagers and were allowed to have a sex life, while they were denied these freedoms on the grounds of religion and honour. Restricting the rights of boys and men in this respect in Salafist communities cancels out this injustice, leads to equal treatment of both genders and is therefore often presented as successful emancipation. The strict dress code for women in the form of (full) veiling can also be interpreted accordingly: it protects young women from being sexualised by outsiders and allows them to reflect on their true value (cf. also Kulaçatan 2020; Groeneveld et al. 2018).

There is also a gender-specific approach for young men, which is primarily based on the perpetuation of toxic masculinity.⁵³ It is the image of the strong and honourable protector who is responsible for both feeding his family and defending the religion. This can be very appealing for young men, who may until then not have felt that their masculinity was valued or that they had the position in society that they felt should be accorded them because of their gender. The Salafist propaganda for the so-called Islamic State in particular has taken up many elements of youth culture that are considered typically masculine. Of significance here is their content glorifying war and violence, often based on extracts from action films or popular video games, and showing acts of war as an exciting adventure (cf. Baron et al. 2023: 321ff.).

Adolescence, in which questions about one's own identity, including in relation to gender and sexuality, are explored and negotiated, is beset with uncertainties. Young people in this phase of life can therefore be very vulnerable to extremist rhetoric. Although gender-related issues are not the only factor in radicalisation, they may still play a decisive role, especially for young people, and should therefore be addressed in the counselling process.

Exercises that encourage reflection on explicit push and pull factors or create an awareness of complexity and contradictions can be used to work openly and explicitly on the topic of (de) radicalisation in connection with the part played by gender roles. By recognising the individual problems and needs of individual index clients and supporting and empowering them in their respective life situations, it is ultimately possible to prevent the instrumentalisation of experienced and/or perceived disadvantage by radical actors and their narratives (cf. Ostwaldt/Coquelin 2018: 13).

⁵³ Toxic masculinity refers to a destructive role model in which an aggressive representation of masculinity is maintained; this can manifest itself in the suppression of the individual's feelings and the use of violence to maintain their supremacy.

Push and pull factors on cards and pictures

Target groups: Index clients, relatives, professionals


Time frame: Session exercise ⌚

Materials: Moderation cards (two colours), pens, table or pinboard/magnetic board or adhesive tape (all prepared beforehand, if possible)

Counsellors working in the area of religiously motivated extremism know that there are a wide range of potential *push factors* that can make young people more susceptible to radical or extremist ideologies and groups (→ 2.2). These include personal, political or social crises, a lack of orientation and prospects, a search for identity and meaning, discrimination and marginalisation, and a range of other factors (cf. BAG RelEx 2022 for details). The gender aspects mentioned above also play a key role and should be focussed on as a specific topic.

A simple answer might be that a number of potential pull factors, in the form of offerings from extremist groups, connect with these push factors (→ 2.2). They also function as recruitment strategies. The promise of belonging to a select, elite community is just as much a part of this as the unambiguous rules and clear roles that are offered, the promise of adventure, heroism and participation in a utopia and the identification of a clear enemy and scapegoats (cf. *ibid.*). Getting to know and understand these and other push and pull factors as social needs of the index client, and their attempts to fulfil these needs, is the aim of the exercise "Pull and push factors on cards and pictures". The exercise can be carried out with relatives of the index client and professionals working with them so that, by changing their perspective, they can develop an understanding of the situation and the needs behind the (potential) radicalisation of the index client. It can also be carried out with index clients themselves in order to stimulate and support their reflection on their inner needs.

Potential push factors: Potential pull factors:

Personal crisis	Sense of belonging
Lack of orientation	Recognition
Lack of prospects	Chosen elite
Search for identity	Leading role
Search for meaning	Adventure
Loneliness	Heroism
Discrimination	Contributing to a “greater cause”
Exclusion	Striving for power
Failures	A clear enemy
Boredom	Clear rules
Uncertainty	Support and orientation
Experience of powerlessness	Romanticism
Sexualised violence	Life partner, marriage and family
...	Justice, fight against anti-Muslim racism
	...

For the exercise, different push and pull factors should be written on prepared moderation cards, with each factor category being assigned its own colour. It is important that the counsellor starts the exercise by explaining what is meant by push and pull factors, and why they can be so crucial in the context of (de) radicalisation and distancing. As an alternative or in addition to the moderation cards, images used by Islamist or Salafist groups as propaganda on social media can also be used. Counsellors should ensure that a wide selection of different themes are depicted. These images often convey an accurate idea of the topics used by radical extremists to promote themselves and their ideology.

Many of the factors mentioned are not gender-specific. Men and women both strive for a sense of community, belonging and recognition and a greater purpose. However, the themes of love and family in particular tend to be aimed at a female audience, while themes such as adventure, heroism and the

exercise of power can often be decisive for men.

In addition, or as a substitute, these and other push and pull factors can be worked on with the clients during the counselling process. The advantage of having pre-prepared cards is that they can be spread out on a table in front of the client, who can then go through them carefully, reflect on them and sort them. In the case of relatives and professionals, this enables them to gain a first general understanding of radicalisation processes. It also makes it possible to determine which social motives behind a (potential) radicalisation may (or may not) apply in the individual case. At the same time, the sorted cards reveal any resources available. If, for example, loneliness is not considered to be a push factor for the index client, this may mean that they (still) have access to a social network (family, friends), and are connected and can be supported.

When working directly with index clients, the counsellor can support them to work out the push and pull factors for themselves, by asking questions such as:

- *“How did you come to your (religious) conviction? Was there a key experience?”*
- *“What is important to you in this community?”*
- *“What was missing for you before you subscribed to this conviction/joined this community?”*

The pull and push factor cards can be sorted on a table, and, for example, placed in two columns/rows next to each other, one for “Applies” and one for “Does not apply”. It is also useful for the client to sort them according to their weighting (their importance). The sorting into this tabular format can also take place on a pinboard or magnetic board, or with the cards stuck on the wall with adhesive tape. It is important that the counsellor supports the relatives, professionals or index client respectively to reflect on the exercise by using various questioning techniques (→ 6.3), for example:

- *“Which motives/needs could apply to your son/daughter? Which ones don’t?”*
- *“What feeling do you have when you look at the cards that have been selected?”*
- *“Which motives/needs are particularly important to you? Which are particularly important for your son/daughter?”*
- *“If your daughter/son had these cards in front of them, which ones would they choose and which ones would they discard?”*

- *“If you look at the cards that you haven’t selected – which of them could be of help in the current situation?”*
- *“What was it like before? What was different?”*
- *“ ... ”*

At the end of the exercise, an overview is created which can be used as the basis for further work, if necessary. For example, if the clients find that one or two themes are particularly important, it may be useful to discuss these in more detail with the index client or find alternatives. It can also be helpful to focus on the available resources that have been identified, and different goals and options for further action can be developed from the exercise.

... because I am a man/woman:⁵⁴ beliefs about gender⁵⁵

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Moderation cards (minimum of three colours), pens, table or pinboard/magnetic board or adhesive tape

The way we view gender is linked to our internalised beliefs. They characterise our thoughts and actions and are difficult to penetrate, as they are often maintained in social interactions and by societal structures. In the exercise “... because I am a man/woman”, the aim is to visualise and reflect on these beliefs.

The client answers the following questions, the answers to which are collected on different-coloured moderation cards:

- *What things do I do because I am a man/woman?*
- *What things do I not do because I am a man/woman?*
- *What would I like to do even though I am a man/woman?*

The aim here is to keep asking what other answers there might be until all the possible answers have been exhausted. When reflecting on the answers, the individual categories are then deconstructed. Initially, the focus is on questions about the origin of the answers. The situations in which certain behaviours occur and which people have shaped the client’s perspective are explored. Circular questions (→6.3) can provide information about where the client’s ideas about gender come from. On the other hand, a change of perspective can also be used in order

to break down entrenched gender roles. With regard to the third question above it is important to reflect on the extent to which clients are hindered by social conditions, religious precepts or a lack of resources, and at which points change may be possible. Exercises for discarding or revising beliefs have already been described in detail in the section on biographical work, and will therefore not be included here (→7.5).

This method is also suitable for working with relatives of the index client, so that a comparison can be made between their view of gender roles and that of the index client. In this scenario, the relatives answer the questions from their own perspective and that of the index client (what does index client XY (not) do because of their gender, etc.). This can reveal not only differences, but also (forgotten) commonalities. It can also become clear to what extent the ideas about gender roles and gender images developed during the index client’s upbringing and socialisation in the parental home, and which emerged later or were acquired elsewhere. In this way, relatives can gain an insight into gender-related factors in radicalisation and possibly even develop ideas that might act as prompts for the index client’s disengagement.

⁵⁴Gender roles outside of the binary tend to play a subordinate role or to be negated in the context of religiously motivated extremism. The exercises for working with index clients therefore tend to be based on this binary, even though the authors recognise that there are more than two genders.

⁵⁵The exercise is based on “... because I’m a girl” (cf. Pates et al. 2010: 165f.) and has been adapted for the counselling context.

What things do I do because I am a woman?

Cooking

Get married

Help my mother with the housework

Go to the mosque

Wear a hijab

Look after my niece

Behave modestly

Meet up with friends

What things do I not do because I am a woman?

Talk to men I don't know

Group work with boys in the classroom

Go to work

Dress provocatively

Go out alone when it's dark

What would I like to do even though I am a woman?

Have a job

Leave the house alone

Attend the Friday prayers at the mosque

Have my own money

The map of my gender socialisation⁵⁶

Target groups: Index clients 

Time frame: Session exercise, "homework" assignment


Materials: Paper/flipchart, coloured pens (also various media such as wax crayons, coloured pencils, markers)

Biographical work is a key element in reflecting on radicalisation processes and can facilitate cognitive openings or deradicalisation in the index client. It can be approached in different ways, which are explained in section 7.5. In this exercise, the index client reflects on their biography specifically in relation to experiences connected to their gender socialisation and the development of their concept of different gender roles. They explore the extent to which issues relating to gender are connected to radicalisation, and how they can help in the distancing process.

The index client is asked to draw a map of their life in relation to their gender identity. The counsellor can initiate this as follows:

"I'd now like to ask you to take a sheet of paper and draw the map of your life in relation to your gender on it. This should show how you have perceived the topic in the past and now perceive it in the present, and what your wishes are for the future. While you're doing this, think about any previous related experiences you have had: When has your gender played a role in your life, and why? Which people and circumstances have had an influence on how you perceive your role as a man/woman? How do you currently perceive yourself in this role? The design of the map is completely up to you – whether you want to do an abstract design using colours and shapes or more realistic and detailed drawings. The most important thing is that your map is meaningful for you."

For some clients, brief instructions can be sufficient to get them started on creative work. However, others may find it easier if the counsellor asks them questions while they work, such as the ones below, and encourages them to reflect during the process:

- "When did you first realise that you were a boy/girl? How did you tell?"
- "What was your favourite toy as a child? Who were your friends?"

© The method is based on "The map of my favourite places" (cf. Röhrbein 2019: 90ff.).

- "What people were important to you when you were growing up? What did you learn from them?"
- "Who were your role models, and for what reason?"
- "How were your school days (or how have they been so far)? What was/is your favourite subject at school, and why? Which classmates or teachers had/have a particular influence on you?"
- "What hobbies and interests have you had up until now? How have they changed over the course of your life?"
- "When did you have positive experiences in relation to your gender? When did you have negative experiences? How did these experiences affect your perception of your gender in other ways?"
- "What do you want for the future in terms of your gender? What kind of man/woman would you like to be?"
- " ... "

The client should approach the creative process intuitively. It does not matter how recognisable the individual elements or the overall finished work are, in terms of the exercise's outcome, as the counsellor and the client will discuss and reflect on them together afterwards. This involves the index client describing and processing exactly what they have depicted and what it means to them, in chronological order. Depending on the time available for this method, it may also be useful to reflect on why the client has chosen to represent certain images in a particular way. With regard to the topic of gender, it is interesting to see which colours have been used and why. In this context, the title that the client gives their map, when asked to do so, can also be very revealing.

After the client has presented the map, the counsellor can ask further questions to promote reflection and move the discussion on from the purely descriptive level. The main aim is to find out where the index client's concept of gender comes from, the people and circumstances that have had an influence and which changes have already taken place in the client's life to date. During this discussion, various systemic questioning techniques (→ 6.3) can be used for the individual stops on the map, and also for the map as a whole. Circular questions from the perspective of a person of a different gender or people who are important for the client can help to encourage new perspectives. In the reflection process, the counsellor should ensure there is sufficient time and space to allow for the topic of the significance of gender for radicalisation to be incorporated. Even if the point at which radicalisation occurred is not explicitly

shown on the map, the counsellor can still ask questions about it. This can reveal key moments which may give rise to options for distancing processes and alternative offerings.

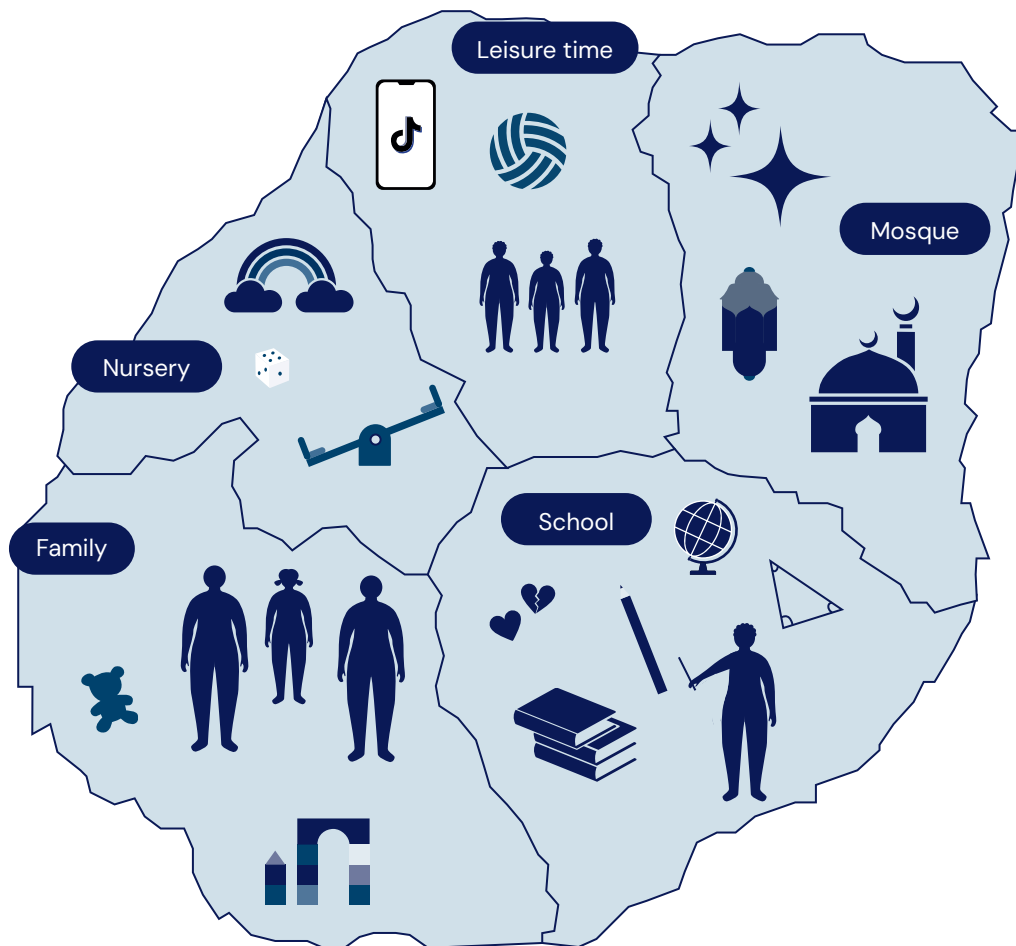


Fig. 29: Index client map - example

Grief and Loss

It may seem strange to find the topic of grief and loss in a methodology textbook on working with (suspected) radicalised individuals and those surrounding them. However, a closer look shows that there are numerous connections between the two topics. Some clients may have experienced a deep crisis of meaning as a result of a loss, e.g. the death of a loved one, and may have joined a religious or extremist group in their search for support and orientation (→ 7.7). Others may have followed the call of the so-called Islamic State and experienced directly the loss of people they were close to who were killed in Syria or Iraq in the course of the daily warfare there. In addition, numerous parents whose (adult) children are believed missing in Syria or Iraq or whose death cannot be clearly confirmed are still receiving counselling from counsellors and counselling centres. This is a form of inconclusive loss in which the loved one may still seem to be psychologically present, despite their physical absence. In such cases there is no dead body, nor even a photograph that might confirm the person's death. Some of the relatives spend years wavering between hope, fear and deep despair. The surviving relatives then have to admit the death of the person to themselves and accept it, even though they have continually tried to block it out (cf. Rechenberg-Winter 2017: 19). Grief is a complex process that is felt when a person loses something essential that they felt connected to. The word *Trauer* (grief) can be traced back to the Middle High German word *truren*, which means to lower one's head and close one's eyes. Grief is therefore usually described as an outwardly visible state, but this is not always the case (cf. Schroeter-Rupieper 2021: 12). Numerous cultures have developed specific grieving or mourning rituals over the centuries, and mourning has thus become a collective process that does not leave the bereaved alone with their pain. Communal mourning rituals can therefore be a resource for those affected and might also be considered for integration in the counselling process (→ 7.14). For people who are grieving, the important point is accepting that their lives will never be the same as they were before their loss.

This process challenges people in different ways. Those who are bereaved often experience a flood of different emotions and feelings. Sadness, anger, anxiety or even feelings of guilt are frequently felt (cf. Alefeld-Gerges/Sigg 2020: 25ff.) and can drive people into an existential crisis. It is not uncommon for those affected to develop a fear of other loved ones dying in the near future, or to feel very insecure about their own death. There may also be overwhelming feelings of guilt (→ 7.9), especially in the case of returnees from the territory of the

so-called Islamic State. “Why did I survive? Why on earth did I take them with me? Why didn’t I do anything when ...?” These can be the agonising questions that give the people concerned sleepless nights. Periods of grief may also be accompanied by physical symptoms: in addition to sleep disorders, nightmares, headaches, stomach pain, loss of motivation and appetite, and poor concentration, the person may also suffer from tachycardia or tinnitus. While such symptoms are not uncommon in someone who is experiencing grief, medical advice should always be sought, especially if the symptoms are prolonged and/or intense (cf. Alefeld–Gerges/Sigg 2020: 24ff.).

In addition to the processing of their emotions, bereaved families are also confronted with the practical challenges of everyday life after a loss, e.g. the lack of a salary to maintain their standard of living, or a lack of time to provide childcare. Many therapists use the model of the American psychology professor William Worden to describe the challenges which arise in the grieving process. In his model, which has been continuously developed since 1982, Worden describes four central developmental tasks that bereaved people need to engage with during the grieving process, so that they can integrate the loss they have experienced into their future life and move forward (Worden 2009):

1. Accepting the reality of the loss
2. Processing the pain of grief
3. Adjusting to a world without the deceased
4. Finding a way to remember the deceased while starting a new life

In contrast to previous models, Worden does not describe grief as a phase that engulfs people, but as a task that can be actively organised by the bereaved person. Many people find talking about the loss very helpful. It is therefore not surprising that clients in counselling sessions feel a recurrent need to talk about the deceased (or missing) person and process what they have experienced. The model can also be discussed directly with clients and used to structure the future counselling process.

The emergency kit

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Shoebox, box, some of the client’s personal memories and possessions

In the initial period after the loss, when the departure of the loved one has to be accepted as a reality and the pain dealt with, the bereaved person may frequently have phases when they experience feelings of deep despair and powerlessness, and these may even be accompanied by suicidal tendencies (→ 7.9). As a preventative measure for these moments, it is helpful for the client to have an “emergency kit” containing specific items that can make it easier to deal with the situation and that have already helped in other crises (cf. Alefeld–Gerges/Sigg 2020: 86). These can vary from client to client. It is important for the counsellor to always be appreciative and interested when the client is packing their box and to help the client in their search for sources of support by asking specific questions. Anything that helps the client can go into the box, and the rule is: the more items, the better. These could be:

- Scented candles or the things needed for a relaxing bath
- A list of favourite songs and possibly headphones to represent listening to music
- Photographs and pictures that hold memories of beautiful moments (experienced by the client with or without the deceased person)
- The phone numbers of good friends who can be contacted at any time
- A favourite cuddly toy from childhood
- Energising objects (lucky charms, stones, shells, religious symbols, etc.)
- Sweets
- A voucher for a massage or a favourite restaurant

Depending on the kind of box/case chosen for the emergency kit, the client may like to customise it on the outside, by painting it, for example. By packing and designing the suitcase themselves, the client is already experiencing self-efficacy, which is a key resource for the grieving process and for dealing with the feelings of powerlessness after a loss. And when difficult moments arise, the client will have their emergency kit to hand, which may help them cope better with a crisis.

Giving shape to feelings

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: ---

When clients talk during the grieving phase and in counselling sessions about strong feelings that engulf and preoccupy them, it can be helpful for them to give these feelings a shape and thus contain them. It is recommended that this exercise is carried out as an imagination exercise, where the client closes their eyes (if they wish to do so and do not find it uncomfortable). The client is then asked to imagine the specific feeling. The counsellor supports the client in this process by asking questions and thus maintains contact with the client during the exercise, so that they do not lose themselves completely in the feeling:

- *“What does your sadness/anger/fear/etc. look like? Does it resemble a human, an animal or a mythical creature?”*
- *“Is the ‘feeling’ small or large? Thick or thin? Fragile or strong?”*
- *“Does your ‘feeling’ have any particular physical characteristics?”*
- *“Can your ‘feeling’ speak? If so, what does it say to you?”*
- *“Is your ‘feeling’ alone or does it have companions? What might the companions look like?”*

The client should visualise the figure in the exercise as concretely as possible. By giving the feeling a shape, the client can contain it and may be better able to distance themselves from it. It may also be helpful for the counsellor to make fun of a certain feature or characteristic of a figure, with the client, so that they can laugh at it together. In this way, the figures may lose their menace. A further way of supporting the client's process of distancing themselves from the feelings is to continue the work using the image of a house. The client draws or imagines a house in which each feeling is allowed to occupy a room. The counsellor then talks with the client about the fact that they, the client, are “the head of the house”. They can visit the feelings in their rooms, or send them to their rooms and keep the doors shut. In this way, the client learns to have more control over their feelings, rather than be controlled by them (cf. Alefeld-Gerges/Sigg 2020: 89).

Haikus and laments

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Short exercise, session exercise or as “homework”  

Materials: Paper, pens

Biographical or creative writing is one of the best-known and most widely used methods in grief counselling. Some clients express their feelings after a loss or a parting in letters (→ 6.3) addressed to themselves or to the deceased person. Writing supports clients in releasing inner pressure, deepening their emotions or distancing themselves from things that may be threatening. However, it is often difficult for the client to write a letter during the counselling session without feeling observed and under pressure. Working with haikus – short Japanese poems – can be a lower-threshold exercise for a session. Due to their strict form, haikus offer an effective structural framework for deep emotions. They consist of three lines, with each line having a different number of syllables. The first line has five syllables and describes a situation, the second consists of seven syllables and describes a feeling, and the last line has five syllables and its content can be freely chosen (cf. Rechenberg-Winter 2017: 53).

Examples:

Writing a lament can be an alternative to composing a haiku. In their classical Greek form, laments also have a fixed structure in which each line has eight syllables (cf. *ibid.*: 54). The number of lines, however, is not predetermined. Laments therefore allow the client more freedom than haikus. They usually consist of three parts:

Part 1. The person laments their situation or loss;

Part 2. The person asks for support to help them deal with the situation;

Part 3. The person gives thanks and affirms their confidence that all will be well.

In the counselling session, a minimum of 20 minutes should be set aside for writing a haiku or lament. The counsellor can also ask the client to complete it as a “homework” assignment. When it is completed, the counsellor can ask the client if they would like to read out the poem. This may be accompanied by an instrument, e.g. a drum. The client should be free to

decide whether or not they wish to do this. A poem can act as a protected space in which a person's (suppressed) pain can find expression. Particularly when the counselling session is attended by several members of the family, this exercise can help bereaved clients to overcome their avoidance of talking about the issue or their inability to talk about the loss they have experienced. In this way it can become a healing encounter, not only for the client themselves, but also in regard to their relationships with others.

When – you – left – my – Sud – den – ly – you're –
side gone

My – whole – world – I – don't – know – the – rea –
came – crash – ing – down son – why

Now – I'm – all – a – lone And – I – am – left – here

A safe place for the deceased person

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Short exercise or session exercise, as necessary  

Materials: ---

After the death of a loved one, many people, regardless of whether they are religious or not, become preoccupied with the question of where their loved one is. Some clients develop their own ideas, which are often influenced by religious ideas and give them a sense of peace. Others, however, cannot find an answer for themselves and are tormented by anxiety. These clients may need support to help them deal with their inner uncertainty. However, if a client is convinced that nothing exists after death, the counsellor must accept this. For other clients, there are two possible ways to approach this topic. Counsellors may adapt the exercise to their own needs and those of their clients and, if necessary, fulfil the aim of the exercise through a more general discussion with the client about a "safe place". The exercise can also take the form of an imagination exercise. For this, the client is asked to take a comfortable position in their chair and close their eyes (if they do not find this uncomfortable). The counsellor then reads out the following text slowly in a calm, thoughtful voice:⁵⁷

"Dear (name of client), please close your eyes if this is comfortable for you and take a comfortable position. Feel how your feet are both firmly on the floor and how your breathing becomes calmer. Breathe in and out deeply. Check whether

 The text is based on Alefeld-Gerges and Sigg (2020: 99) and has been thematically adapted and expanded here.

your position feels comfortable. Perhaps you feel the need to change your position again. If so, please feel free to do so and find a position that feels comfortable for you.

I would like to invite you now to find a safe place for your loved one where they are well cared for and protected. Your subconscious and your love for them can help you in this search. Do you perhaps already have an idea of where your loved one would be well looked after? Perhaps you have known this intuitively for a long time – perhaps images are coming into your head and you feel a connection to them. Or perhaps you're thinking of places and times when your loved one was happy. When they felt protected. All these images will help you as you look for a safe place for your loved one.

Let your subconscious go on a journey through the whole world and perhaps even beyond to see which place is the right one for your loved one. Take your time and see which images come into your head. Perhaps you and your subconscious need more time? Perhaps a few more days or weeks? That's perfectly fine, because you should take all the time you need to answer this important question.

If you've already found a safe place for your loved one, listen now to yourself to see how this calming place makes you feel. Take a look around. What do you see? What sounds do you hear? What do you feel there? You might even meet your loved one there. If there is anything else you would like to tell your loved one, say it to them in your thoughts. Experience what it feels like to have found this safe place for them. Now you know that this place will always be there for you. And the most important thing is that you know that your loved one is being kept safe in this protective, healing place and that they are doing well.

When you feel the time is right, say goodbye to this place or to your loved one in this place.

Now slowly return to this room with all your attention, to the world and the knowledge that your loved one no longer lives here."

The exercise can be left at this point to have its effect on the client; it does not necessarily have to be discussed by the counsellor and client together. However, if the client mentions that they would like to share and discuss what they have experienced with the counsellor, time should be set aside for this immediately after the exercise.

Traces of you

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Moderation cards, pens

When a loved one dies, the people left behind often struggle with the feeling that nothing remains of them. In reality, however, our loved ones have a huge impact on us and leave their mark on our lives in different ways. When a person is grieving, it is important to make them aware of this. Counsellors can support this by writing down each of the following statements (cf. Paul 2021: 118) on a separate moderation card:

- You influenced how I see the world by:
.....
- I have these habits from you:
.....
- I experienced this for the first time with you:
.....
- You showed me:
.....
- I have learnt from you:
.....
- The two of us have achieved something together:
.....
- I am physically similar to you:
.....
- I move or speak like you:
.....
- You are a role model for me in:
.....
- You are important to me:
.....

The counsellor should place the cards face down in front of the client, with the statements hidden, and reveal them to the client one by one. The client's task is to complete each statement and so call to mind these traces of the deceased person. The statements made by the client are noted down on each card, and these are given to the client at the end of the counselling session.

Memory mosaic

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise, "homework" 

Materials: Paper, glue, paint, pens, postcards (with wise sayings), personal photographs

According to Worden, one of the central tasks in the grieving process is to find a way to remember the deceased person whilst moving forward into a new phase of life. Many bereaved people therefore set up places of remembrance in their home, where they display pictures of the person they have lost. This

idea can be taken up in the counselling process, to provide an opportunity for the counsellor to talk to clients about the deceased person and about incorporating them in the client's future life. Clients can be encouraged to create a memory mosaic that they can take home and put in a special place. For this exercise, a wide assortment of materials for crafting, painting and gluing are required, as well as personal mementos and photographs from the client, which will be incorporated into the picture. The predicted size of the finished mosaic should always be discussed with the client beforehand. Some clients prefer to create a small A4-size mosaic, while others create large posters dedicated to the deceased person. The size and shape of the mosaic are not important; it is the feelings of the client that are paramount, and it must feel right for them.

During the creation of the mosaic, the counsellor is there to support the client. The counsellor should show an interest in the mosaic and be curious about the pictures and shapes that the client incorporates. This can lead to discussions that can help the client to integrate their loss into their future life.

Concluding the Counselling Process

A successful counselling process provides professional support to people who face personal challenges at certain stages in their lives. The process shared by the client and counsellor is, however, of a finite duration, and a parting is therefore inevitable. This parting is often attended by a variety of different emotions. On the one hand, it is the start of a better future for the client, and is therefore a time of joy, or even relief. On the other hand, partings are often associated with separation and loss, and can therefore represent a challenge for those involved (cf. Schwing/Fryszler 2018: 313). Clients may experience anxiety at the end of the counselling process, particularly in the case of longer counselling processes which have extended over months or even years. They may fear, for example, that they will not be able to cope with future challenges. In the case of clients who have already had to go through painful or poorly managed separation experiences in the past, the counsellor should manage the conclusion of the counselling process with particular sensitivity (cf. *ibid.*; Joyce/Sills 2015: 265). The counsellor must

also deal with their own feelings of no longer being needed and no longer seeing someone with whom they have become familiar. They may therefore tend towards avoidant behaviour that delays the parting or may not even mention the conclusion of the counselling process. An almost reflexive reaction is to suggest to the client that the counsellor will remain available in the future, by saying: "And if you run into problems again, don't hesitate to get in touch."

If the impending parting is addressed in the counselling, clients display differing reactions. Some may devalue the work they have done with the counsellor, or the counsellor themselves. This is frequently seen among adolescents and young people. They talk about how boring the meetings have been, say that they have not achieved anything or devalue the counsellor directly by insulting them. Others may claim that they have fallen back into old patterns of behaviour, or disclose what seem to be new problems. This can manifest itself in them saying surprising things, such as that they have suddenly met their old friends from the extremist community again. Behind such statements is perhaps a desire to make the counsellor worry and to find a reason to continue working with them. There may even be minor attempts at blackmail in this context. For example, clients might say that without the support of the counselling, they will certainly fall back into old patterns or become radicalised again. Other clients, meanwhile, may use rationalisation to create an inner distance from the topic of the ending of the counselling, in order to avoid being confronted with feelings of loss (cf. Schwing/Fryszer 2018: 314).

Many counsellors can find it particularly difficult if clients refuse to engage with the ending process, preempt the parting or do not attend the final counselling sessions. In some circumstances, it may be helpful for the counsellor to put their words of farewell in writing for the client, and express their regret or surprise at the abrupt ending. However, the counsellor should also make it clear to the client that they accept their decision and offer them best wishes for the future. Moreover, there should not be any hint of the counsellor feeling any personal affront, and there should, in particular, not be any indication that the counsellor feels that the client may not yet be ready to manage on their own and should therefore have continued with the counselling (cf. *ibid.*: 319; Joyce/Sills 2015: 270f.). This would not be respectful of the person's decision and might also cast doubt on all that the counsellor and client have achieved together.

Endings, especially after a long counselling process, require sufficient time so that clients can go through the various phases, which are similar to the stages of saying goodbye described by the psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. Clients may initially react with denial when the end of the shared counselling journey is imminent. This may be followed by phases of anger, negotiation and severe shock (depression/suffering) before

acceptance is achieved (cf. Kübler-Ross 1997: 51ff.). In order to make the separation process as smooth as possible for the client, counsellors can remind the client about the future separation throughout the counselling process, by incorporating it into the discussions at an early stage. Sessions in which progress and setbacks are discussed are particularly suited to this (→ 7.8). The topic of parting can also be mentioned if the client is dealing with losses in relationship contexts in the counselling sessions (cf. Joyce/Sills 2015: 272). Ending processes are also made easier if clients consistently experience appreciation from the counsellor for their successes and have developed a healthy sense of self-esteem and self-awareness. It is also helpful if the client has built social networks (outside of extremist communities) in which social connection can be experienced, as this will tend to make the client less dependent on the support and encouragement of the counsellor (cf. Schwing/Fryszer 2018: 317). As the development of social networks is often an inherent part of the exit and distancing process, it should also form part of the counselling contract between the client and counsellor.

During the ending phase, i.e. the last counselling sessions, there are two tasks which must be carried out. Firstly, these sessions should give the client the opportunity to summarise what has been achieved, appreciate it and bring closure to the past. This is not merely about the client bidding farewell to their previous destructive behaviour, but also about reflecting on the positive things they might have experienced in the extremist group/community, and integrating these into their life story. For example, many clients say that they experienced the cohesion within the group as a feeling of positive togetherness. The client should not be forced to abandon that impression as part of the counselling or ending processes, as this could create negative feelings and lead them to remain mentally attached to the extremist group/community.

In addition to reflecting on the counselling process and reorienting the client, the second task of the ending process is to create space for concluding the counselling relationship and thus a relationship between two people in which many personal things were shared. Clients should be encouraged to express and let go of all the feelings they have about it, such as anger, rage or sadness (cf. *ibid.*: 318; Joyce/Sills 2015: 274). The counsellors can lead by example here – for example, by expressing gratitude for the journey they have shared, in which the counsellor has also been able to learn and grow, thus making an opening for the client to also express their feelings.

Farewell rituals

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Bottles, balloons, lighter, photographs, etc., as necessary (to be contributed by the client, following discussion)

It is often a good idea to organise the last counselling session so that it incorporates pleasant farewell rituals. These can also be used to round off the end of a counselling session, mark the end of a previous phase of life or support grief counselling (→ 7.13). Farewell rituals often incorporate an element of cleansing which is intended to create space for something new. One of the most common rituals is the burning of objects, letters (→ 6.3) or photographs in order to unburden oneself of a certain topic. Other farewell rituals common in counselling and therapy practice include the releasing of balloons with wishes for the future, burying mementos of a person or event, or sending a message in a bottle. These rituals are based on the idea of externalisation, i.e. the shifting of a person's problems and worries from the inside to the outside. This can help to make the problem more tangible, more manageable and less threatening for the client (cf. Caby/Caby 201b: 63), enabling them ultimately to be released or relinquished.

It may be helpful for the counsellor to first discuss with the client whether there are any rituals that are used in their family history or in their country of origin for similar situations, and whether these might be useful for marking the end of the shared counselling process in a positive way. For some clients, for example, certain forms of prayer may be linked to farewell ceremonies or to celebrating new beginnings, and the client may wish to say these in the presence of the counsellor, or say them together with the counsellor.

The farewell letter

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper, pens

For many people, writing things down has a healing effect. It can reveal thoughts and make feelings more accessible (→ 6.3). Writing a farewell letter is therefore a very appropriate activity to mark the end of the counselling process. Clients may wish to write a letter to their old self or to a loved one outlining recent positive developments, stating their prospects and wishes for the future, and bidding farewell to their old life. Writing a letter can also be a way for the client to work out once more the reasons for their breaking away from their old behaviours, or to set out what they have learnt about themselves during the time they spent as part of an extremist group, or during the counselling process. Some clients find it important to express

their gratitude for the positive things they experienced as part of the (extremist) group, or during the counselling. A farewell letter should never be written in anger or express self-blame. If the client writes a letter which emphasises such feelings, it may indicate that they have not yet succeeded in integrating their extremist past into their own life story, and that further counselling may be necessary.

The content of the letter does not have to be shared with third parties or read out loud – it is primarily intended for the client's personal reflection, to emphasise what has been achieved and to inspire motivation for a better future. However, clients are often very keen to share their letter with the counsellor or people close to them, in order to get external reassurance, recognition and encouragement for what they have achieved, or to show remorse and apologise for any stress they may have caused their family. It should be noted here that such letters, even if made public, are nevertheless not objects for analysis. They should therefore not be interpreted or discussed inappropriately by the counsellor or relatives. Feedback on the letter from those present should be brief and positive, as otherwise there is a risk that the client might feel unseen or even rejected.

The counsellor can discuss with the client what they would like to do with the letter after it has been written. The letter could be burnt, as in the farewell ritual mentioned above, tied to a balloon and released into the air or sealed in a bottle and released in the sea. Some clients favour one of these options as there is a feeling of finally closing a previous phase of life. Others may want to keep the letter and choose a special place at home where they can store it. In this way, they can integrate the past into their new life. The letter remains part of a memory that they can revisit whenever they wish.

The counsellor can also write a letter to give to the client at the end of their shared work process. Some clients find it helpful to receive praise and recognition for the challenges they have overcome, and reading good wishes for their future may make them feel more positive about engaging with it. Personal experiences, e.g. funny or moving situations from the counselling process, can also be included in the letter. The client should always be free to respond to this letter or not, as they wish; they may even want to use it as the basis for their final counselling session with the counsellor.

The empty chair

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: An additional chair

“The empty chair” is a well-known method from Gestalt therapy (→ 3.4) that is suitable for concluding the counselling process and “for exploring interpersonal dynamics and trying out new behaviours” (Joyce/Sills 2015: 140). As the name suggests, this method requires an additional, unoccupied seat in the counselling room. In the simplest form of the exercise, the client is asked to imagine a person from their own life or a part of their inner self from their life story, such as a former self or a member of their inner team (→ 7.11). They should then picture that person sitting in the chair, and have a conversation with them. The client might feel emboldened to say things, explore feelings and try out new behaviours that they might otherwise suppress if they were actually addressing that person or that part of themselves. Counsellors should take the time to introduce the client to the exercise, especially in the case of clients who are not yet familiar with such methods. The counsellor can encourage the client’s imaginative capabilities by asking specific questions about the imagined person’s sitting position, facial expression or gestures. Only when the client has a concrete image in their mind should they start the dialogue with the imagined person or the part of the inner self. If the exercise is used in the final counselling session, it is useful to bring the client’s old self into the room.

Example:



Counsellor:	Imagine that your old self is now sitting opposite you. Can you describe to me what he’s wearing, how he is sitting on the chair and how he is looking at you?
Client:	Hmmm ... that’s not so easy. I think he would probably be wearing a jalabiya to show his allegiance to Islam. He would still have that beard and would be sitting here feeling rather annoyed, looking repeatedly at his mobile phone and not really wanting to listen.
Counsellor:	So your old self wouldn’t feel like having a conversation and would try to ignore us.
Client:	Yes, exactly. He wouldn’t understand any of this and would have no idea why he was here.
Counsellor:	I see. But we want him to listen to us. You have something to say to him today. So can you imagine approaching him?
Client:	I can. But he wouldn’t listen to me, I don’t think.
Counsellor:	What could you do to make him interested?
Client:	(Silent). Perhaps I could get his attention with a hadith ⁵⁸ .
Counsellor:	Can you think of a suitable one?

Client:	Yes. I know just the one.
Counsellor:	That’s great. Then say it to your old self.
Client:	Okay. but it feels a bit strange. I’ll give it a try. Hey, brother, the Prophet said ...
Counsellor:	That is a really beautiful hadith. Is your old self paying attention now? Can you imagine how he’s looking at you now?
Client:	Yes, I can. He looks a bit surprised. (Laughs).
Counsellor:	Well, why don’t you tell your old self how it was for you, when you were him?
Client:	Hey, Brother Ibrahim. I’ve been thinking a lot about our time together recently and I realised that it wasn’t as nice as you always claimed it was. Our friends and our so-called “brothers” – where were they when we needed them? Because of you, I hurt our mother and upset her, so I couldn’t talk to her either. And school ... yeah, we dropped out of school too. And even though we always said that we knew a lot about Islam, that wasn’t true at all. I mean, we never read the whole Qur’an – we just repeated what others told us. We were actually totally alone.
Counsellor:	Your old self made you very lonely.
Client:	Yes, very. I didn’t have anyone to talk to.
Counsellor:	So, are you angry with your old self? If so, then please tell him.
Client:	Yes, I’m kind of angry with you. But also somehow not. After all, you didn’t do it on purpose, and maybe you didn’t see where it would lead you or us. You were still young and just wanted to be something special ... to be seen.
Counsellor:	To be seen ... who did you want to be seen by?
Client:	First and foremost by Dad. He never took us seriously or had any time for us ...
Counsellor:	Now that you’ve said all this, when you look at your old self sitting in front of you, how does he react to you?
Client:	He looks sad. Somehow his cool manner from earlier is gone.
Counsellor:	Is there something your old self wants to tell you now?
Client:	...
Counsellor:	Are you still angry after what you’ve said or can you forgive your old self?

Client:	Ahh, I guess I can forgive him. He didn't want to hurt me. He only meant well.
Counsellor:	Are you able to tell him that directly, but still tell him why you have to say goodbye to him now?
Client:	Hey, Ibrahim – I'm not angry with you now. I know you didn't want things to go that way, but rather But I also want to say goodbye to you today. You're a part of my past, but not my future. Bye, my brother.

The counselling wheel

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials Paper/flipchart, template if necessary (→ 12.8), pens

The last session might also be used as an opportunity to reflect on the entire counselling process. The “counselling wheel” can be useful here – the counselling process is discussed with the client on four levels, with a focus on their resources and the future.

In the centre of the wheel is the ego, surrounded by a circle showing the client's challenges at the beginning of the counselling process. The level of reflection is based on these challenges. The client makes a note here of the explanatory patterns for the challenges that were discovered during the counselling process. After this, there is a third circle: this encompasses all the resources (e.g. competences or people) who will help the client to deal with similar challenges in the future. This exercise shows the client once again that they will be able to draw on a wide range of options in the future to deal with challenging situations or any unmet social needs. The counsellor then provides targeted support for the final reflection process by asking questions or giving encouragement:

Examples:

- “Who gave you support during this difficult time?”
- “Which of your skills helped you to move away from the (extremist) group/community?”
- “Which of your character traits will now help to ensure that you are not seduced by ‘easy answers’ when faced with similar challenges (e.g. racism)?”



In the first three levels, the client should work their way outwards to the next circle for each challenge in the wheel, but this does not apply in the fourth level. Here, the client can write down their wishes or hopes for the future, which the previously developed resources might help them to achieve. Due to the layout of the wheel, the original challenges in the inner circle now appear small, whereas the resources and wishes for the future occupy a greater area, helping to ensure that the client leaves the counselling process looking forwards to the future. With this wheel of supportive resources, competences and people, the client will be able to overcome both major and minor problems in the future and manage their troubles, and their life will be able to “run smoothly” again.

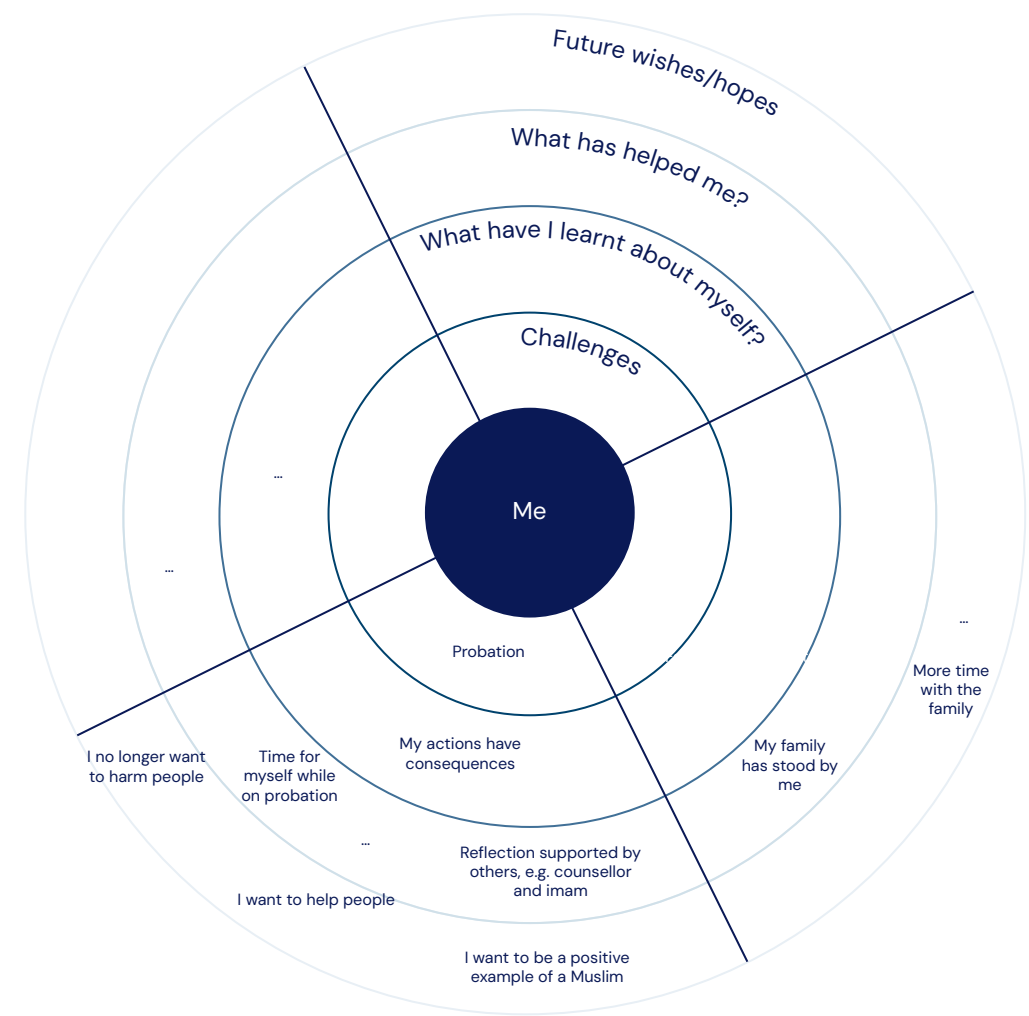


Fig. 30: The counselling wheel – an example

The future collage

Target groups: Index clients, relatives 

Time frame: Session exercise 

Materials: Paper, newspaper cuttings/pictures, personal pictures, ribbons, glue, pens, brushes, paint and other materials

A more creative way to end the counselling process if it has extended for a long period is to create a future collage. Making a collage is a well-known tool, particularly in art therapy, and is very popular with creative and inquisitive clients, as it offers them an opportunity to get in touch with their own issues using an artistic approach. Moreover, a collage can focus on different themes and feelings simultaneously. Almost anything can be used in a collage: newspaper headlines, pictures from magazines, personal photographs, lengths of rope, found objects from nature, paint and many other materials. The multi-layered nature of collage makes it easy for the client to approach the topic of their personal development as part of the counselling process. However, the counsellor should emphasise to the client beforehand that the creation of the collage is linked to looking towards the future. This does not prevent sad or sensitive subjects from being integrated into the collage or, indeed, into the client's life. However, the major focus should be (re)discovered resources, competences, wishes and hopes, so that the client can leave the counselling process feeling motivated and with excited anticipation about entering a new phase of life. Another option could be for the client and counsellor to work together on creating a collage in the final stages of the counselling process. However, this should be discussed with the client beforehand to determine the extent to which they wish the counsellor to directly contribute to creating the image and adding elements, as they may wish to limit the counsellor's role to a supporting one. Otherwise, the client may find it intrusive if the counsellor plays too active a role in creating the client's collage. The subjects portrayed in the collage can be discussed and reflected on together.



Fig. 31: The future collage - an example



Examples:

- “Which of the elements in the collage represents our counselling? Why did you decide to use these materials or colours to depict the counselling process?”
- “If you were to show this collage to your mother, which of the elements would she definitely like? Why would that be important to you?”
- “I can see many of your strengths depicted in your collage, such as your creativity. Which of your skills and competences did you want to depict in this picture? Can you show me where they are?”

At the end of this process, the counsellor should once again show appreciation for the client's collage. This could take the form of the counsellor providing a picture frame in which the artwork can be placed, so that the client can take it home. It is also possible for people close to the client to be involved in this, which could facilitate a mutually sympathetic exchange of ideas with the client about what they have worked on and serve to show respect. This could act to once again strengthen the client's self-esteem in the final stages of the counselling process, and anchor them in their relationship system.

Peer Case Consultation

Dr Vera Dittmar

In the area of social environment, distancing and exit counselling, practitioners are repeatedly faced with challenging situations with regard to clients, for which they must find a prompt and adequate response. This is where peer consultation can help. Peer consultation is based on the idea that people (from similar fields of work) are qualified to advise each other (cf. Tietze 2021). This form of support is based on both professional resources and personal life experience, as our experiences also influence how we assess a given situation and what options for action are available to us (cf. Herwig-Lempp 2016). The question therefore arises as to how professional and personal resources can best be identified and tapped into for professional issues in order to make optimal use of them in peer consultation.

This chapter introduces the concept of peer case consultation and discusses possible counselling topics. In addition, a case study and various methods and approaches for peer case consultation are presented. These can be used by practitioners within their teams. Finally, special challenges which may arise in this particular area of work are discussed.

Concept, Characteristics and Topics of Peer Case Consultation

Peer consultation is understood here as a structured consultation session in a group, usually amongst colleagues, with the aim of developing solutions and suggestions for professional practice. It should be noted that this method spans a spectrum of more or less structured approaches. For example, a practitioner might call a colleague after a counselling session and ask her to listen briefly to a case and share her impression of it. Alternatively, there could be a weekly team meeting at which all active cases are mentioned at the start, with individual cases then being discussed in more detail as required. These two variants are rather unstructured, but can still allow for mutual support and reflection on professional concerns. For this reason, they are often used in practice.

In addition, the need to take a closer look at a counselling case may arise within counselling practice. It then makes sense to take a structured approach and invest more time in an individual case. One possibility for this in-depth approach is *interview*, which is presented in more detail later in this chapter.



Peer case consultation and interview

Peer case consultation takes various forms: from a brief conversation whilst making coffee in the kitchen to a (brief or extended) telephone call, from a topic in the weekly team meeting to a specially arranged in-depth discussion on a difficult case. Peer case consultation can therefore be unstructured or structured, incidental or planned. One highly structured and planned variation of case consultation is *interview*, in which a wide range of topics can be reflected on in depth using key questions.

There are some key characteristics of peer consultation which apply to both unstructured and structured versions of this form of consultation. These characteristics include the fact that

peer consultation is based on equal status for all participants and is usually voluntary (cf. Herwig-Lempp 2016). In addition, there is no external supervisor or coach present to guide the counselling process. After all, the idea of peer consultations is that the resources are available within the team itself and therefore the responsibility for the entire consultation process lies with the participants (cf. Tietze 2021). This is also the main difference from *supervision*, a form of consultation for the professional concerns of practitioners which is carried out in the presence of a supervisor (cf. Schlee 2019; Foertsch 2020). Another difference is that in the case of peer consultation, all participants are actively involved and can thus contribute their acquired skills, their specialist knowledge, their professional experience and, in some cases, experiences from their own lives (cf. Tietze 2021).

Furthermore, for all peer consultations, a clear distinction must be made between consultation and decision-making. Peer consultation often takes place before a decision of any kind is made in the counselling process, such as on how to proceed in a particular counselling case. It is important to remember that the practitioner who presents a counselling case ultimately also makes the decision regarding how to proceed. Thus, the aim of peer consultation is not to influence the decisions of practitioners, but to support them in developing tailor-made solutions for practical challenges (cf. Herwig-Lempp 2016).

An exception to this rule may be justified if, in the course of the peer consultation, it begins to look like the client could be a danger to themselves or others. If aspects relevant to safety are involved, decisions may have to be made (e.g. on the involvement of external stakeholders), which often have to be taken by the project managers. In such a case, it must be clearly communicated that a decision must be made in accordance with the (legal) requirements for the prevention of extremism. This decision is often only made after peer consultation, usually by a manager or a counselling team, who ultimately decide how to proceed.

The characteristics presented so far apply to all peer consultations. In contrast, the following section lists characteristics which are specific to a structured approach. Such an approach means that the peer consultation is structured by proceeding along a number of steps or phases, which provide it with a fixed sequence. This ensures that the essential aspects of solving a problem are considered, whilst simultaneously allowing for variation in the choice of methods, amongst other things. This form of peer consultation usually takes place in a group of five to ten people, as this allows the skills of those present to be brought to bear (cf. Tietze 2021). All participants are familiar with the individual phases and steps of peer consultation. This means that the process itself ensures reliability and the expectations of the participants are clearly formulated (such as listening, expressing ideas or asking questions).

As previously mentioned, the aim of peer consultation is to develop solutions to professional problems. There is therefore a broad spectrum of topics which affect everyday working life in general or which apply specifically to certain fields of work, e.g. distancing counselling in the context of religiously motivated extremism. In general, any topic is suitable for consultation as long as a professional issue is involved.

However, according to Tietze (2021), peer consultation *is not* suitable in the following situations:

- If there are conflicts within a consultation group (in this case an external supervisor or wholly uninvolved practitioner will have to facilitate).
- If all participants are affected by an immense challenge (in this case, an external practitioner who can provide the necessary distance will also be required).
- If there are general organisational issues, e.g. the question of implementing supervision (workshops in which managers and those in positions of authority also participate would be more effective here).
- If there are private issues such as family problems or any dissatisfaction which practitioners may have with their own lives (such matters have no place in peer consultation, even though the integration of personal perspectives on professional situations is valued).
- If there are personally sensitive issues such as changing jobs (in this case, individual supervision outside the peer-based context would be more appropriate).

The topics listed here provide an indication of whether an issue is suitable for peer consultation or whether it should be addressed by means of individual and group supervision or within the context of staff discussions or during normal team meetings.

Peer consultation sessions are particularly suitable for reflecting on cases in depth. This includes such topics as:

- the development of counselling strategies, e.g. for individual clients, in family systems or in the course of specialist counselling,
- the development of access options for individual clients,
- the development of stable counselling relationships,

- the development of working hypotheses about causal relationships in counselling cases,
- reflecting on relationship patterns in a case and on patterns of conflict and cooperation,
- solving decision-making dilemmas for practitioners and clients,
- reflecting on the role of one's own background and life history in a case,
- identifying, supporting and strengthening the clients' resources,
- questioning the practitioner's position and role within the systemic context of a case, or within an institution,
- reflecting on the societal, interpersonal and political contexts of a case, insofar as they have an impact on the case itself, even if only because the client perceives it that way.

Intervision as a Structured Variation of Peer (Case) Consultation

There are various suggestions in the literature as to how structured peer consultation can be carried out. The following is an example of guidance developed by Beratungsnetzwerk Grenzgänger (Bochum, IFAK e. V.) and tested in practice.⁵⁹ The guidelines address various aspects of counselling which enable deeper understanding of a case.

Before the guidelines are used as part of a consultation process, the tasks and roles which come into play in peer consultation must be assigned.

- a) For example, there is a *case narrator* or *case presenter*, who introduces their case.
- b) The *facilitator* coordinates the peer consultation.
- c) Optionally, there can be a *secretary*, who writes down the key points for the case narrator.
- d) And finally, there is the *group of practitioners*.

In practice, the speaker usually reports the need for intervision at a team meeting, after which a time slot during which a certain number of practitioners will be available is jointly agreed. It is then determined who is available to act as a facilitator. Thus, intervision rarely takes place “spontaneously”, even if the level of urgency may require that a time slot be found within the next 24 hours. Once the roles have been allocated, the intervision process can begin. The following overview, “Guidelines for intervision” (Dittmar 2023), sets out the process of intervision (see Table 8).

Note: the following guidelines use the terms “case presenter” and “group”: a practitioner would like to talk about a case. In other words, they “present” the case to the group of participating practitioners. This is why the term “case presenter” is used.

©With special thanks to manager Susanne Wittmann and her team.

The terms “case narrator” and “case giver” can also be found in the literature. These terms are also used synonymously in this chapter. In the overview, however, only the term “case presenter” is used. The term “group” refers to the group of participating practitioners.

	Procedure (period)	Who?	How?
1	Case presentation (10 min.)	Case presenter	Spontaneous description from the perspective of their own experience (can also be presented using a genogram or timeline)
2	Question (2 min.)	Case presenter	Formulation of a task for the group, e. g.: “Please think: what could the next steps in the counselling process be?”
3	Flashlight (feedback) (5 min.)	Group and case presenter	Exchange of impressions, mental images and physical feelings. At the end, the case presenter can express the impact that the session has had for them.
4	Follow-up questions (5 min.)	Group	Questions which seem important for understanding the situation (factual questions)
5	“If I were” session (5 min.)	Group	Group members each identify with a person involved in the case and speak from the perspective of their role, e.g. “I’m Ali and I’ll outplay you all, I’m clever”, “I’m his mother and I’m ashamed ...”, “I wish I had a friend ...”, “I feel oppressed ...”. The ideas are thrown into the room.
6	Optional round (images and metaphors) (2 min.)	Group and case presenter	Discussion of shared images and metaphors
7	Hypothesis generation (10 min.)	Group and case presenter	Articulation of assumptions regarding causes, conditions, coping strategies, actions, relationships, communication, etc.
8	Gathering of resources (10 min.)	Group and case presenter	Discussion of the resources of those involved in the case
9	Proposals and measures (5 min.)	Group, concluded by case presenter	Clarification of which attitudes and goals seem important; gathering of proposed solutions and ideas; measures for testing hypotheses
10	Prognosis (2 min.)	Case presenter	Statement regarding the likely further development of the case

Table 8: Guidelines for intervision (cf. Dittmar 2023)

The Individual Steps of Intervision Presented Using a Case Study

Step 1: Case presentation⁶⁰

The case presenter or case giver presents the case in question. A previously prepared genogram or timeline could also be used for this (→ 6.3). In the case study presented here, the case giver gives a verbal report:

“Family B⁶¹ fled to Germany for protection and safety. The parents were aged 45 (father) and 40 (mother) at the time. The five children were aged 17 (male), 12 (female), 9 (female), 7 (male) and 4 (male). Before fleeing, the father had been arrested and tortured by the country’s security service. The mother had been beaten by the security service, which the children witnessed. Having been forced to agree to work as an informant in future, the father was released from prison. The family fled within 24 hours.

After fleeing, the family initially lived in refugee accommodation in a former school. A German couple, pensioners, looked after the family and helped them with everything.

Their eldest son, Bolat (now 19 years old), initially went to an integration class at school. However, he was not successful at that school and had no desire to learn, so he switched to a vocational school. Bolat slept badly during this time, had nightmares, was always tired and struggled to concentrate. He felt like an outsider and started taking drugs. He often talked about his dream of returning to his home country. There, everything would be alright. He would feel at home there. He called and still calls his father a ‘mental cripple’ who is afraid of everything. Bolat doesn’t respect him and is ashamed of him.

A year ago, Bolat found some new friends in town. He prays five times a day and calls his parents and siblings ‘bad’ Muslims. He raves about Sharia law, which he believes protects them from sin and hell. Bolat no longer takes drugs. He doesn’t work, but goes to meetings with his new friends

⁶⁰The case study is taken from Systemische Beratung in der Extremismusprävention (Dittmar 2023).

⁶¹Counselling centres support clients in a wide variety of situations: those with a history of fleeing their countries and those without, those with a family history of migration and those without, religious diversity (Christian, Muslim, atheist), a wide range of ages and all genders. Certain characteristics have been taken here from numerous real cases, constructing an entirely fictitious case as a case study.

increasingly often and comes back showing aggression: ‘We are the “good” Muslims. We have to get active and do something about the non-believers. They’re oppressing us.’”

In this case study, it was the volunteer couple who made initial contact with the counselling centre.

Step 2: Question

In the second step, the question for the peer consultation is established. In this case, the practitioner is unsure about which clients it would make sense to do in-depth counselling with. They formulate the question as follows: “Which clients should the counselling focus on in the coming period and what objectives are needed in order to promote the fundamental goal of Bolat’s distancing?” The question should primarily focus on the case presenter and not on the actions or feelings of the client. The advantage is that the practitioner receives support within their own scope of action and they can reflect on their own view and feelings about the case. This in turn has a direct impact on the client.

In other words: the practitioner who presented their case assigns one of their own counselling tasks to the group of practitioners.

Step 3: Flashlight (feedback)

In a short flashlight session following the case description, the facilitator asks the group about their first impressions. The group comes up with the following flashlights:

- “It saddens me that the family experienced so much violence in their country of origin and that the children directly witnessed their mother being beaten.”
- “I find the large number of people involved here almost overwhelming.”
- “I think there’s already a lot of information here about Bolat and his family system.”
- “When I look at Bolat’s life, I’m not surprised that he is looking for a sense of belonging and seemingly simple answers.”

A feedback session like this allows the group of practitioners to express their sympathy, as emotional reactions and thoughts or observations are what is desired. The key question could be formulated as follows: “What thoughts, feelings and internal reactions does the case narrative trigger in me?” (Tietze 2021: 135).

At the end of the round, the case narrator can outline what the feedback triggered in them: “What particularly affected me? Am I also frightened or confused?” The case narrator could, for example, report that they were particularly struck by the situation of the children, who may have felt particularly defenceless at times.

Step 4: Follow-up questions

The facilitator invites the group to ask questions which may be important for understanding the case:

- 1) “How emotionally involved are the volunteers? Does their support primarily relate to pragmatic aspects or also to emotional ones?”
- 2) “Where does the family live now?”
- 3) “Did Bolat say anything about his career aspirations?”
- 4) “How is the mother doing emotionally? Could she be an anchor for this case?”

The case narrator clarifies the factual questions: 1) The volunteers were very active, but are now overwhelmed by how the case has developed and are emotionally unable to cope with what is happening. 2) The family now lives in a flat. 3) Nothing has been said about this and it could be a sore point. 4) The mother appears somewhat unstable and may be depressed.

Step 5: “If I were” session

In this step, the facilitator asks the group of practitioners to identify with individual people involved in the case. These thoughts and ideas are all thrown into the room:

- “As his father, I am ashamed that my son thinks so badly of me.”
- “As Bolat, I look down on my family, who behave like bad Muslims.”
- “As his mother, I feel powerless when my son joins these other young men who seem aggressive to me.”
- “As his younger sister, I think it’s good that Bolat no longer takes drugs. But he still scares me.”
- “As a volunteer, I wanted to support a family in need. And I still want to do that. But these problems overwhelm me.”

- “As his teacher, I would like to keep Bolat in school. But his behaviour is very disruptive now.”
- “As Bolat, I am not interested in school any more because I have more important goals.”
- “As Bolat’s mother, I want him and all my children to have a good life in Germany. I want to support them in this.”
- “As Bolat’s father, I feel overwhelmed by my noisy family and I withdraw.”
- “As his sister, I wish Bolat would leave me alone and let me lead my own life.”

The practitioners slip into different roles here and can also have completely contradictory thoughts about how individual family members feel. The case giver listens attentively, but they can also take on roles themselves if they wish.

Step 6: Images and metaphors

The facilitator asks the group of practitioners which images and metaphors arise in them in response to the case. They describe

- A “feeling of oppression”
- “A sense of insecurity”
- “Balancing on a narrow ledge”
- “Regarding Bolat: the group gives him respect, a sense of belonging, maybe he can even sleep better, or maybe not. It’s like inflating a balloon. There’s air in it for a while, but it doesn’t solve the problems.”

Step 7: Hypothesis generation

The facilitator asks the group to form working hypotheses about the case. These are based on assumptions and suppositions made by the practitioners about the client’s life situation (cf. Schwing/Fryszler 2018). In other words: they are based on “unconfirmed assumptions which stimulate questions and thus generate new insights” (von Schlippe/Schweitzer 2016: 121). In systemic counselling, working hypotheses are a central element, running throughout the counselling process, with some persisting and continuing, while others end up being refuted or proving to be unhelpful. Working hypotheses form the basis for the development and implementation of counselling strategies, including the application of counselling methods.

The topics of working hypotheses are various. They can, for example, relate to observations about the family system or even speculations about the extent to which the problem observed represents an attempt to solve a challenge (cf. Dittmar 2023).

In the case study, the practitioners form the following working hypotheses:

- Bolat wants a strong and active father. Due to his traumatic experiences, the father is unable to fulfil his son's wishes.
- Bolat's experiences of fleeing his home country and his father's unresolved trauma have left him feeling very insecure.
- It may be that Bolat instead has a close emotional bond with his mother, but she cannot "function" as a protective mechanism for her son due to her own problems (she may be depressed).
- Working with Bolat could involve questions related to problems getting worse. This could be fun for him and arouse his creative potential.⁶²
- His nightmares and lack of sleep could indicate traumatising, which should be dealt with using therapy.
- The Islamist scene offers Bolat respect and a sense of belonging. So far, he has not experienced this within his peer group.
- Bolat still seems to be clinging to his past in his home country. Using his perceptions of the past, it may be possible to derive specific wishes which could also be fulfilled in Germany.
- At the end of this step, the case giver can reflect on whether there are any working hypotheses which seem particularly convincing and useful (or not) for the continued counselling process.

Step 8: Gathering of resources

In this step, the facilitator asks the group of practitioners what resources they think the clients and the people involved in the case have. Although the family is in a difficult situation overall, the following resources are identified:

- The family managed to flee to Germany.
- All the children except Bolat regularly go to school.

© This working hypothesis shows that practitioners are often already thinking about solutions during this step even though, according to the process used for intervention, these should only be developed in step 9. In practice, however, things get mixed up, as the hypothesising step indirectly encourages the practitioners to look for solutions. It is helpful to ensure that enough working hypotheses are formed around the problem. In addition, whoever is taking the minutes should also include these (pre-mature) working hypotheses.

- The social support provided by the volunteers should be seen as a resource.
- Bolat appears to be active. In other contexts, this activity could have a more "positive" effect.
- Bolat exhibits a desire to live his life in a specific way. This desire could be made use of in other areas.
- The teacher's willingness to communicate should be seen as a resource.
- The mother's general openness should be seen as a positive signal.

At the end of this step, the case giver takes over again by offering their own views.

Step 9: Proposals and measures

Step nine involves advice, recommendations and tips for the case giver. It should be noted that advice can also restrict freedom of action if those giving the advice primarily want to exert influence. Not all advice is motivated by the desire to help. Whether or not individual suggestions are suitable in certain situations is decided by the case giver. Ultimately, it is a matter of the advice being accepted, rejected or further developed (cf. Tietze 2021). To emphasise that the decision lies with the case giver, stock phrases such as "I would recommend ..." or "My advice would be ..." can be used. In the case study, the following suggestions are made: "My advice would be to start very low-key with Bolat and perhaps try out some outdoor activities (football, going for a walk in the park ...) and then try to start a conversation just in passing, so to speak."

- "I would perhaps recommend trying to gain access through his love for his mother, based on the idea that counselling is something his mother really wants, and respect for one's parents is very important in Islam."
- "It would be nice if Bolat could be encouraged to get some therapy, but that could be very difficult."
- "I would try to work more closely with his mother and see how she can influence her son positively. A practitioner who is also a mother, who has counselling experience and/or has a background in Islam might be chosen to counsel the mother."

- “My advice would be not to approach the father again, as he has already clearly expressed his dislike of counselling.”
- “I would recommend making occasional phone calls to the volunteers to motivate them to carry on supporting the family.”
- “I would try to ask the teachers for support and keep looking for ways to motivate Bolat to go to vocational school.”

The case giver then decides which suggestions are acceptable and which ideas could be made suitable for use in the counselling situation. The case giver decides to actually try a very low-threshold approach outdoors. To ensure that this happens, the mother should be given some encouragement so that she can motivate her son to take part in the activity. The consultation team is asked who could imagine working with the mother. The other recommendations are also positively accepted by the case giver.

Step 10: Prognosis

Finally, the facilitator asks for a prognosis of how the case is expected to develop. In this prognosis, the case giver once again refers to the difficulty of accessing the primarily affected person (Bolat) and the seemingly mentally unstable mother as a secondarily affected person. It is therefore assumed that in this case much depends on how access is organised and to what extent the counselling relationship with Bolat and his mother can be maintained. Overall, it is considered a rather difficult case. To some extent this is because therapeutic help, which could be useful, has often not been accepted by other clients from this culture.

Overall, there are opportunities for counselling with various people in Bolat’s social system, as well as counselling with Bolat himself. These opportunities can be used in the continued counselling process.

Other Peer Consultation Variations

The structured intervention described above enables new ideas and approaches for counselling strategies, but requires a certain period of time. In practice, it has therefore proven to be a good idea to use smaller formats of peer consultation in addition to in-depth intervention, which is carried out as required. For example, “basic method modules” (Tietze 2021: 116), which often only take ten minutes, can also be used to discuss a counselling case in greater depth during team meetings. In the following sections, a selection of these method modules is presented.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a classic method for coming up with creative ideas. The aim is to generate as many different ideas as possible, as it is assumed that the sheer quantity of ideas will mean that some good-quality ideas will also be present. Half-finished ideas and harebrained thoughts should be added to this pool of ideas, too. Other people’s ideas can also be elaborated on (Herwig-Lempp 2016).

The guiding questions for brainstorming in the context of peer case consultation could be as follows: “What are the possibilities in this counselling case? What could be done in such a problematic situation?”

It should be noted that no criticism of any kind is permitted during the process of collecting ideas, be it through “killer sentences” (“That would cost too much!”) or through facial expressions and gestures (e.g. shaking one’s head). The aim here is to produce a diverse range of ideas, which necessarily includes harebrained and unrealistic ones. Following the brainstorming session, the case giver decides which ideas might actually be suitable for the case (Tietze 2021).

Questions regarding problem deterioration

Questions for problem deterioration can be helpful not only in counselling sessions with clients, but also in peer consultation. The key question here is: “What can the practitioner do to make the client’s problem worse?” This counselling method module is also known as “reverse brainstorming” and can be particularly

useful when the case giver feels powerless in the face of the circumstances and/or the clients or if, for example, previous attempts at finding a solution have now become a problem themselves. At the end of the process, all responses regarding problem deterioration are examined to determine what solutions they contain (Patrzek/Scholer 2018; Tietze 2021).

Brief comments

This method is used when the case giver wants statements about the case in question. The group of practitioners can freely express their observations, fears, advice or assumptions about the case. Despite the great freedom, however, the comments should be appreciative, varied and concise (cf. Herwig-Lempp 2016). Key questions could be: *What did I notice about the way the case was described? Or: what stood out in terms of content in the counselling case?* The case giver listens to all the comments and can then select the comments they consider most useful at the end of the process.

Two important pieces of information

Especially if a counselling case has become very complex, it can help to ask the practitioner group: *what are the two most important pieces of information for me?* This can help to quickly establish a clear picture. Either the two most important pieces of information are collected freely or the case presenter formulates a key question (a counselling task) beforehand which they would like information on. In general, this method module makes it possible to gain a different perspective on the case and develop new starting points for taking action (cf. Tietze 2021).

Reflection on a successful case

This method module is unusual in that the starting point is not a challenge or a specific problem, but a report about a success. This can include the successful implementation of an idea in counselling practice, the successful completion of a counselling process or the achievement of an important counselling objective. The idea behind this is to be able to learn from positive experiences and use them to further develop the strengths, skills and general resources of all practitioners present (cf. Herwig-Lempp 2016). Suitable key questions are:

- “How did the counsellor achieve success?”
- “What behaviours, skills or ideas contributed to this success?”
- “Which external factors were helpful (including other actors from the client’s social system)?”

⁶³This does not refer to colleagues in the literal sense, but to people in a similar field of activity or with a similar background.

As a result, all the practitioners present gain an impression of which strategies are suitable for specific problem situations and are worth making more use of in the future. Focussing on successful cases can also increase the counsellor’s motivation and their expectations of success.

Case reflection with a family board

A family board (→ 7.4) can also be used to carry out short case reflections. It is possible, for example, to have the case giver present their counselling situation during an open peer case consultation. This can be supervised by someone and, depending on the number of colleagues present or participating, may be accompanied by other colleagues as observers. If a practitioner positions themselves, the client and other people relevant to the case in relation to each other on the board, this can support the reflection process in other creative ways. Questions about closeness and distance, feelings and desired situations are just as revealing as feedback consisting of the assumptions, theories and feelings of those colleagues who act as observers. Short sessions of e.g. 15 minutes can be used to reflect on the case either freely or with questions which are clearly formulated at the beginning.

Special Challenges

In counselling practice, there are various challenges when using peer consultation. First of all, it is important to find a time slot which is sufficiently long for enough practitioners to be present. From time to time, in order to gain additional impetus, it is sometimes helpful to invite outsiders to the intervention sessions, e.g. practitioners from another counselling organisation, whether from a similar counselling context or from a working context with completely different target groups, challenges and counselling goals.

It can also be challenging to implement all dimensions of “collegiality” in peer consultation. According to Tietze (2021), collegiality does not just refer to:

- the willingness of the practitioners present to help each other,
- the mixture of colleagues⁶³ and
- the interchangeability of roles among the practitioners, but also to the
- equal status of the members of a consultation group.

In the context of peer consultation, the ideas, experiences and opinions of all participants are to be regarded as equal, even if those present do not occupy equivalent positions in their day-to-day work, for example because they are managers, experienced practitioners, young professionals or interns. This can be particularly important if the peer consultation takes place in the context of an extremely hierarchical organisation such as a public authority or a hospital and, for example, a senior physician does not accept a nurse as a facilitator. It is therefore essential to consider how peer consultation can be sensibly embedded in the field of work in question.

Another challenge in counselling practice is dealing with clients or relatives who exhibit mental health problems and disorders. It can at first be difficult for practitioners to recognise psychological abnormalities for what they are and then to assess the extent to which certain counselling strategies make sense in this context – or not. In such cases it can help to draw on psychological expertise. The Evoluo⁶⁴ project, for example, offers case-related coaching by systemic (trauma) therapists, so that peer case consultation can be complemented by specifically including a psychological perspective. Amongst other things, this makes it possible to determine the potential of counselling despite psychological challenges and/or to look for ways in which clients can be motivated to accept therapeutic support in addition to counselling.

©Evoluo is a collaborative project between VPN and Grenzgänger (IFAK e. V.). In addition to psychological training for practitioners, it also offers case-related coaching on psychological and therapeutic aspects. More information can be found at <https://www.grenzgaenger.nrw/>

Summary

With the help of peer case consultation, practitioners and teams have the opportunity to reflect on current cases, work through past case experiences and develop new perspectives and ideas for future casework through the diversity of perspectives involved. To this end, practitioners' skills within the team as well as their individual experiences, knowledge and approaches are utilised. In addition to ensuring the quality of the casework, this also serves to continuously develop the expertise of the practitioners involved. There are various options for (case) counselling. It can be carried out using a set of structured guidelines or with the help of various (systemic) methods, or else it can be freely configured. Depending on the case situation, the team composition and individual access, it makes sense to vary or adapt the methodological approaches. The following points are important: it should be clear to all those involved that the focus of the consultation is the case giver, even if their concerns are directly linked to a case or a person.

Notes:

- Peer case consultation can give the practitioner decisive impetus for their continuing counselling strategy.
- Peer case consultation can also be used for training purposes, as the case presenter and the group of practitioners take away new ideas for their own counselling practice.
- In day-to-day counselling, it can be difficult to find time for peer consultation. Nevertheless, it is important to provide time for this task.
- Shorter and less structured forms of peer consultation (such as brief discussions of a case) can also be helpful.
- A particular challenge is often the assessment of mental health problems or disorders and the development of appropriate counselling strategies. In these cases, peer case consultation with (systemic) therapists can help.

References

Abay Gaspar, Hande/Daase, Christopher/ Deitelhoff, Nicole/Junk, Julian/Sold, Manjana (2018): Was ist Radikalisierung? Präzisierungen eines umstrittenen Begriffs. In: PRIF REPORT 5/2018. Leibniz-Institut Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK). Frankfurt am Main. URL: https://www.hsfk.de/fileadmin/HSFK/hsfk_publicationen/prif0518.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Abay Gaspar, Hande/Daase, Christopher/ Deitelhoff, Nicole/Junk, Julian/Sold, Manjana (2019): Vom Extremismus zur Radikalisierung. Zur wissenschaftlichen Konzeptualisierung illiberaler Einstellungen. In: Daase, Christoph/ Deitelhoff, Nicole/Junk, Julian (eds): Gesellschaft Extrem. Was wir über Radikalisierung wissen. pp. 15–43. Campus Verlag. Frankfurt am Main.

Abay Gaspar, Hande (2019): Rechtsextremismus und religiös begründeter Extremismus. In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (ed.): Reflect Your Past. URL: https://www.bpb.de/system/files/dokument_pdf/200407_bpb_Reflect-your-past-Rechtsextremismus.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Abdul-Hussain, Surur (2012): Genderkompetenz in Supervision und Coaching. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.

Alefeld-Gerges, Beate/Sigg, Stephan (2020): Trauerarbeit mit Jugendlichen. Junge Menschen begleiten bei Abschied, Verlust und Tod. 2nd edition. Don Bosco Medien. Munich.

Allroggen, Marc (2018): Psychische Störungen bei Tätern hochexpressiver Gewalt – Fachtag “Radikalisierung in der ärztlichen und psychotherapeutischen Behandlung erkennen, bewerten und angemessen handeln”. Berlin, 16 May 2018. Universitätsklinikum Ulm. URL: https://www.uniklinik-ulm.de/fileadmin/default/Kliniken/Kinder-Jugendpsychiatrie/Praesentationen/FT_2018_05_16_Allroggen_Psy-Stoer.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Allroggen, Marc (2020): Psychische Störungen im Zusammenhang mit Radikalisierung. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb). URL: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/infodienst/306897/psychische-stoerungen-im-zusammenhang-mit-radikalisierung/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Allroggen, Marc/Heimgartner, Anna/ Rau, Thea/Fegert, Jörg M. (2021): Radikalisierungsprozesse wahrnehmen – einschätzen – handeln: Grundlagenwissen für Ärzt*innen und Psychotherapeut*innen. 2nd edition. Universitätsklinikum Ulm. URL: https://www.uniklinik-ulm.de/fileadmin/default/Kliniken/Kinder-Jugendpsychiatrie/Dokumente/Handlungsempfehlung_Radikalisierungsprozesse.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Albrecht, Ralf (2017): Beratungskompetenz in der Sozialen Arbeit – Auf die Haltung kommt es an! In: KONTEXT, Zeitschrift für systemische Perspektiven 48/2017. pp. 45–64. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Arbeitsgemeinschaft (AG) Sozialisationsbedingungen (2020): Aufwachsen unter den Augen des Allmächtigen? Eine systemische Betrachtung von Sozialisationsbedingungen in geschlossenen religiös-weltanschaulichen Familiensystemen und Anregungen aus der Resilienzforschung. URL: <https://vaja-bremen.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Aufwachsen-unter-den-Augen-des-Allma%CC%88chtigen.pdf> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Arkowitz, Hal/Westra, Henny A./Miller, William R./Rollnick, Stephen (2020): Motivierende Gesprächsführung bei der Behandlung psychischer Störungen. Beltz. Weinheim. Aslan, Ednan/Akkilic, Evrim Ersan/Hämmerle, Maximilian (2018): Islamistische Radikalisierung. Biografische Verläufe im Kontext der religiösen Sozialisation und des radikalen Milieus. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.

Austeda, Franz (1989): Lexikon der Philosophie. 6th, expanded edition. Verlag Brüder Holline. Vienna.

Baatz, Ursula (2017): Spiritualität, Religion, Weltanschauung. Landkarten für systemisches Arbeiten. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Baer, Silke (2013): Pädagogische Zugänge in der Rechtsextremismusprävention und Intervention – Entwicklungen und Standards in Deutschland und Europa. In: Baer, Silke/Möller, Kurt/Wiechmann, Peer (eds) (2014): Verantwortlich Handeln: Praxis der Sozialen Arbeit mit rechtsextrem orientierten und gefährdeten Jugendlichen. pp. 47–66. Verlag Barbara Budrich. Berlin.

Baer, Silke (2017): Mädchen im Blick. Gender-reflektierte Präventionsarbeit. In Kärger, Jana (ed.): “Sie haben keinen Plan B”. Radikalisierung, Ausreise, Rückkehr – zwischen Prävention und Intervention. pp. 287–302. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb). URL: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/infodienst/231380/gender-reflektierte-praeventionsarbeit/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Baer, Silke (2020): Gender – Genderaspekte im religiös begründeten Extremismus und jugendkulturelle Ansätze für die Präventionsarbeit. In: RISE – Jugendkulturelle Antworten auf islamistischen Extremismus. URL: https://rise-jugendkultur.de/files/2023/02/kurzexpertise_gender.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Baer, Silke/Weilnböck, Harald (2017): “Was in aller Welt treibt ausgerechnet junge Frauen in den Extremismus?” Genderaspekte in der Radikalisierung und Prävention. In: Böckler, Nils/Hoffmann, Jens (eds): Radikalisierung und terroristische Gewalt. Perspektiven aus dem Fall- und Bedrohungsmanagement. pp. 79–97. Verlag für Polizeiwissenschaft. URL: https://www.cultures-interactive.de/files/publikationen/Fachartikel/2017_Baer_Weilnböck_WasinallerWelt.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Bamberger, Günter (2010): Lösungsorientierte Beratung. Beltz. Weinheim/Basel.

Baron, Hanna/Haase, Imke/Herschinger, Eva/Ziolkowski, Britt (2023): “Gender matters”?! Zur Bedeutung von Gender in der Distanzierungs- und Deradikalisierungsarbeit im Bereich des Salafismus. In: Benz, Samira/Sotiriadis, Georgios (eds): Deradikalisierung und Distanzierung auf dem Gebiet des islamistischen Extremismus. Erkenntnisse aus der Theorie – Erfahrungen aus der Praxis. pp. 317–338. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.

Barthelmess, Manuel (2016): Die systemische Haltung – Was systemisches Arbeiten im Kern ausmacht. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Becker, Kim Lisa/Dabrowski, Yvonne/Hampe, Sally/Müller, Marion (2021): Gestärkt durchs Leben – Übungen zur Resilienzförderung in der Grundschule im Themenfeld Aufwachsen in islamistisch und salafistisch geprägten Familien. Fachstelle Liberi (Türkische Gemeinde in Schleswig-Holstein e. V.). URL: <https://provention.tgsh.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Resilienzbroschuere-Gestaerkt-durchs-Leben-Uebungen-zur-Resilienzfoerderung-in-der-Grundschule-im-Themenfeld-Aufwachsen-in-islamistisch-und-salafistisch-gepraegten-Familien.pdf> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Becker, Kim Lisa/Dabrowski, Yvonne/Schurbohm, Axel/Müller, Marion (2020): Kinder und Jugendliche in islamistisch und salafistisch geprägten Familien. Einschätzungen und Fallerfahrungen von Beratenden im Themenfeld religiös begründeter Extremismus, Ergebnisbericht. Fachstelle Liberi (Türkische Gemeinde in Schleswig-Holstein e. V.). URL: <https://provention.tgsh.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Ergebnisbericht-Kinder-und-Jugendliche-in-islamistisch-und-salafistisch-gepraegten-Familien.pdf> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Becker, Kim Lisa/Meilicke, Tobias (2019a): Kinder in salafistisch geprägten Familien – Aufwachsen mit Risiko- und Schutzfaktoren. In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb). URL: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/infodienst/289912/kinder-in-salafistisch-gepraegten-familien/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Becker, Kim Lisa/Meilicke, Tobias (2019b): Umgang mit Kindern aus salafistisch geprägten Familien – Handlungsempfehlungen für pädagogische Fachkräfte im Schulkontext. In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb). <https://www.bpb.de/themen/infodienst/302146/umgehen-mit-kindern-aus-salafistisch-gepraegten-familien/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Benz, Samira/Sotiriadis, Georgios (eds) (2023): Deradikalisierung und Distanzierung auf dem Gebiet des islamistischen Extremismus. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.

Benz, Wolfgang (2020): Vom Vorurteil zur Gewalt. Politische und soziale Feindbilder in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Herder. Freiburg im Breisgau.

Beushausen, Jürgen (2020): Beratung lernen. 2nd, revised edition. Verlag Barbara Budrich. Opladen/Toronto.

Biene, Janusz/Daase, Christopher/Junk, Julian/Müller, Harald (eds) (2017): Salafismus und Dschihadismus in Deutschland. Ursachen, Dynamiken, Handlungsempfehlungen. In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Schriftenreihe. Volume 10.123. Campus Verlag. Frankfurt am Main.

Biene, Janusz/Junk, Julian (2017): Salafismus und Dschihadismus. Konzepte, Erkenntnisse und Praxisrelevanz der Radikalisierungsforschung. In: Kärger, Jana (ed.): “Sie haben keinen Plan B”. Radikalisierung, Ausreise, Rückkehr – zwischen Prävention und Intervention. pp. 115–128. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Bonn.

Bowlby, John (2021): Bindung als sichere Basis – Grundlagen und Anwendung der Bindungstheorie. 5th edition. Ernst Reinhardt Verlag. Munich.

Bozay, Kemal (2017): Ethnisch-nationale Homogenitätsvorstellungen, Ethnozentrismus und Migrationsdiskurse im transnationalen Raum. In: Fereidooni, Karim/El, Meral (eds): Rassismuskritik und Widerstandsformen. pp. 213–228. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.

Böttcher, Astrid (2017): Radikalismus und Extremismus. Konzeptualisierung und Differenzierung zweier umstrittener Begriffe in der deutschen Diskussion. Leiden University. Leiden.

Brandt, Leon A./Meysen, Thomas (2021): Religion und Weltanschauung in der Erziehung: verfassungsrechtliche Freiheiten und Grenzen. pp. 103–122. Praxis der Rechtspsychologie (RPsych) 1.

Breiner, Georg/Polt, Wolfgang (2020): Lösungen mit dem Systembrett. Ein umfassendes Handbuch für Aufstellungen mit dem Systembrett in Unternehmensberatung UND persönlicher Beratung. Ökotopia Verlag. Aachen.

Brentrop, Martin/Kupitz Gaby (2015): Rituale und Spiritualität in der Psychotherapie. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Bronisch, Thomas (2014): Der Suizid – Ursachen, Warnsignale. Prävention. 6th, revised edition. C. H. Beck. Munich.

Brüggemann, Helga/Ehret, Kristina/Klütmann, Christopher (2016): Systemische Beratung in fünf Gängen. Ein Leitfaden. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Bucay, Jorge (2019): Komm, ich erzähle dir eine Geschichte. Frankfurt am Main.

Büro zur Umsetzung von Gleichbehandlung e. V. (2021): Dossier zum Thema Diskriminierung von trans* Personen in Deutschland. URL: https://www.bug-ev.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Ausdruckversion_Trans_dossier.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Glaube oder Extremismus? Hilfe für Angehörige: Die Beratungsstelle Radikalisierung. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF). Nuremberg. URL: https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/themen/sicherheit/beratungsstelle-radikalisierung.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=7 (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

(ed.) (2017): Evaluation der Beratungsstelle "Radikalisierung", Abschlussbericht. URL: https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Forschung/Forschungsberichte/fb31-evaluation-beratungsstelle-radikalisierung.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=17 (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft religiös begründeter Extremismus e. V. (BAG RelEx)

(2017): Zivilgesellschaftliche Präventionsarbeit im Themenfeld religiös begründeter Extremismus. Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft religiös begründeter Extremismus e. V. (BAG RelEx). Berlin.

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft religiös begründeter Extremismus e. V. (BAG RelEx)

(2019): Ligante. Fachdebatten aus der Präventionsarbeit. Special edition: Standards für das zivilgesellschaftliche Engagement gegen religiös begründeten Extremismus. Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft religiös begründeter Extremismus e. V. (BAG RelEx). Berlin.

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft religiös begründeter Extremismus e. V. (BAG RelEx)

(2022): Radikalisierung verhindern – Extremismus entgegenwirken. URL: <https://www.bag-relex.de/wissen/radikalisierung-deradikalisierung/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (BMFSFJ)

(2022): Übereinkommen über die Rechte des Kindes – VN-Kinderrechtskonvention im Wortlaut mit Materialien. 7th edition. URL: <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/93140/78b9572c1bffd3345d8d393acbbfe8/uebereinkommen-ueber-die-rechte-des-kindes-data.pdf> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (BMBFSFJ)

(2025): Demokratie fördern. Vielfalt gestalten. Extremismus vorbeugen. Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (BMBFSFJ). Berlin. URL: <https://www.bmbfsfj.bund.de/bmbfsfj/service/publikationen/demokratieleben--144560> (accessed: 9 September 2025)

Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat

(BfM) (2022): Verfassungsschutzbericht 2021. Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat (BfM). Berlin. URL: https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/themen/sicherheit/vsb-2021-gesamt.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=6 (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Bundesregierung (2016): Strategie der Bundesregierung zur Extremismusprävention und Demokratieförderung. Bundesregierung. Berlin. URL: <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/109002/5278d578ff8c59a19d4bef9fe4c034d8/strategie-der-bundesregierung-zur-extremismuspraevention-und-demokratiefoerderung-data.pdf> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Bundesverband Mediation e. V. (BMEV)

(2022): Was ist Mediation? URL: <https://www.bmev.de/mediation/was-ist-meditation.html> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Caby, Filip/Caby, Andrea (2017a): Die kleine Psychotherapeutische Schatzkiste – Teil 1, Tipps und Tricks für kleine und große Probleme im Kindes-, Jugend und Erwachsenenalter. 3rd, revised edition. Borgmann Media. Dortmund.

Caby, Filip/Caby, Andrea (2017b): Die kleine Psychotherapeutische Schatzkiste – Teil 2. Weitere systemisch-lösungsorientierte Interventionen für die Arbeit mit Kindern, Jugendlichen, Erwachsenen und Familien. 4th, fully revised and expanded edition. Borgmann Media. Dortmund.

Campana, Remo (2010): Das Familienwappen: Eine Methode zum besseren Verständnis der emotionalen Situation und dem familiären Umfeld von Kindern und Jugendlichen. In: KONTEXT 41/2. pp. 101–116. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen. URL: <file:///C:/Users/kim.lisa.becker/Downloads/DasFamilienwappen-RemoCampana.pdf> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Conen, Marie-Luise/Cecchin, Gianfranco (2020): Wie kann ich Ihnen helfen, mich wieder loszuwerden? Therapie und Beratung mit unmotivierten Klienten und in Zwangskontexten. 7th edition. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Dahinden, Janine/Moret, Joelle/Duemmler, Kerstin (2011): Die Herstellung sozialer Differenz unter der Bedingung von Transnationalisierung. In: Allenbach, Birgit et al. (eds): Jugend, Migration und Religion. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven. pp. 225–248. Pano Verlag. Zurich.

Dantschke, Claudia (2017): Die Rolle der Angehörigen in der Radikalisierungsprävention. In: Kärger, Jana (ed.): "Sie haben keinen Plan B". Radikalisierung, Ausreise, Rückkehr – zwischen Prävention und Intervention. pp. 227–237. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Bonn.

De Shazer, Steve/Dolan, Yvonne (2020): Mehr als ein Wunder – Lösungsfokussierte Kurztherapie heute. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Denkzeit (2015): Denkzeit in den Justizvollzugsanstalten Wriezen und Luckau-Duben. URL: <https://www.denkzeit.info/projekte/denkzeit-in-den-jvas-wriezen-und-luckau-duben/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Denkzeit (n.d.): Theoretische Überlegungen. URL: <https://www.denkzeit.info/trainingsprogramme/theorie-methode/theoretische-grundlagen/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Deutscher Bundestag (BT) (2018): Drucksache 19/4674 from 1 October 2018: Gesetzentwurf der Bundesregierung. URL: <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/19/046/1904674.pdf> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Beratung e. V. (DGfB) (2023): Bestens beraten – Wie erkenne ich eine gute Beratung? URL: <https://dachverband-beratung.de/beratung/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Deutsche Traumastiftung (n.d.): Was ist ein Trauma? URL: <https://www.deutsche-traumastiftung.de/traumata/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Dießner, Helmar (2008): Gruppendynamische Übungen und Spiele: Ein Praxishandbuch für Aus- und Weiterbildung sowie Supervision. 6th edition. Junfermann Verlag. Paderborn.

Dittmar, Vera (2023): Systemische Beratung in der Extremismusprävention. Theorie, Praxis und Methoden. Kohlhammer Verlag. Stuttgart.

Ebbecke-Nohlen, Andrea (2012): Skulptur. In: Von Wirth, Jan/Kleve, Heiko (eds): Lexikon des systemischen Arbeitens, Grundbegriffe der systemischen Praxis, Methodik und Theorie. pp. 436–438. Carl Auer Systeme. Heidelberg.

Ebner, Julia (2018): Radikalisierungsspirale. Das Wechselspiel zwischen Islamismus und Rechtsextremismus. URL: <https://www.ufuq.de/aktuelles/radikalisierungsspirale-das-wechselspiel-zwischen-islamismus-und-rechtsextremismus/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Europäischer Berufsverband für Lachyoga und Humortraining e. V. (2022): Lachforschung – die Gelotologie. URL: <https://www.lachverband.org/lachforschung-die-gelotologie.html> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Festinger, Leon (1957): A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance. Stanford University Press. Stanford.

Finger-Trescher, Urte (2014): Wirkfaktoren der psychosozialen Beratung – Ist psychosoziale Beratung hilfreich? In: Schnoor, Heike (ed.): Psychodynamische Beratung in pädagogischen Handlungsfeldern. pp. 43–52. Psychosozial-Verlag. Gießen.

Fisher, Roger/Ury, William/Patton, Bruce (2004): Das Harvard-Konzept. Der Klassiker der Verhandlungstechnik. 22nd edition. Campus Verlag. Frankfurt am Main.

Fritzsche, Dorothee (2012): Das Tetralemma. Ein Coaching-Tool zur Entscheidungsfindung. In: Coaching-Magazin 3. URL: <https://www.coaching-magazin.de/coaching-tools/tools/das-tetralemma> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Foertsch, Dörte (2020): Supervision und Fallreflexion. In: Levold, Tom/Wirsching, Michael (eds): Systemische Therapie und Beratung. 3rd edition. pp. 295–301. Carl-Auer-Systeme Verlag. Heidelberg.

Fonagy, Peter/Gergenly, György/Jurist, Elliot L./Target, Mary (2002): Affektregulierung, Mentalisierung und die Entwicklung des Selbst. Klett-Cotta. Stuttgart.

Freiheit, Manuela/Uhl, Andreas/Zick, Andreas (2021): Ein systematischer Blick auf die Präventionslandschaft in Deutschland. In: MAPEX-Forschungsverbund. Radikalisierungsprävention in Deutschland. Mapping und Analyse von Präventions- und Distanzierungsprojekten im Umgang mit islamistischer Radikalisierung. pp. 49–81. Osnabrück/Bielefeld.

Frey, Dieter (2016): Einführung und konzeptionelle Klärung. In: Frey, Dieter (ed.): Psychologie der Werte. Von Achtsamkeit bis Zivilcourage – Basiswissen aus der Psychologie und Philosophie. pp. 1–12. Springer-Verlag. Berlin.

Fuest-Bellendorf, Almut (2021): Mediation hocheskalisierender Elternsysteme – Vom Verlassen eisiger Höhen. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Gender Diversity Fachverband (2022): Qualitätsstandards. URL: <https://www.gender-diversity.de/qualitaetsstandards/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Gesing, Alexander (2023): Die Zielgruppenerreichung in der Deradikalisierungs- und Distanzierungsarbeit. In: Benz, Samira/Sotiriadis, Georgios (eds): Deradikalisierung und Distanzierung auf dem Gebiet des islamistischen Extremismus. pp. 151–167. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.

Gold, Ilja/Weinberg, Eva/Rohr, Dirk (2021): Das hat ja was mit mir zu tun? Macht- und rassistisch-kritische Perspektiven für Beratung, Therapie und Supervision. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Groeneveld, Antja/von Barga, Lasse/Dänzer, Andrea/Babat, Schielan/Becker, Kim Lisa (2018): Lämmer unter Wölfen? Mädchen und Frauen im aktuellen Rechtsextremismus und Salafismus. RBT Schleswig-Holstein (Aktion Kinder und Jugendschutz Schleswig-Holstein e. V.) & PROvention (Türkische Gemeinde in Schleswig-Holstein e. V.). URL: <https://provention.tgsh.de/>

<wp-content/uploads/2020/11/M%C3%A4dchen-und-Frauen-in-aktuellem-Rechtsextremismus-und-Salafismus.pdf> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Grotberg, Edith H. (2011): Anleitung zur Förderung der Resilienz von Kindern – Stärkung des Charakters. In: Zander, M. (ed.): Handbuch Resilienzförderung. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. Wiesbaden.

Grote, Teresa/Fenzl, Jessica (2022): Erdbeerfrösche und Teppichäpfel – #33 Systemische Aufstellungsarbeit. Podcast episode from 10 August 2022. URL: <https://erdbeerfroescheundteppichaepfel.podigee.io/37-systemische-aufstellungsarbeit> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Gudehus, Christian/Christ, Michaela (eds) (2013): Gewalt. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch. J. B. Metzler. Stuttgart/Weimar.

Gün, Ali Kemal (2018): Interkulturelle therapeutische Kompetenz – Möglichkeiten und Grenzen psychotherapeutischen Handelns. Kohlhammer. Stuttgart.

Haase, Volker/Murawa, Michél (2019): Sicher ist hier erstmal keiner – Thesen zum Zusammen von Rechtsextremismus, Bindung und Ausstiegsarbeit. URL: <https://www.praeventionstag.de/html/download.cms?id=859&datei=sicher-ist-hier-erstmal-keiner.pdf> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Hamm, Rüdiger José (2021): Sicherheitshalber Prävention. Zu den Auswirkungen des Sicherheitsdiskurses auf zivilgesellschaftliche Träger in der Prävention gegen religiös begründeten Extremismus. In: Ligante. Fachdebatten aus der Präventionsarbeit. 4th edition. pp. 21–25. BAG RelEx. Berlin.

Hanswille, Reinert/Kissenbeck, Annette (2014): Systemische Traumatherapie – Konzepte und Methoden für die Praxis. 3rd edition. Carl-Auer. Heidelberg.

Heimes, Silke (2015): Kreatives und therapeutisches Schreiben: Ein Arbeitsbuch. 5th, supplemented edition. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Henninger, Mirka (2016): Resilienz. In: Frey, Dieter (ed.): Psychologie der Werte. Von Achtsamkeit bis Zivilcourage – Basiswissen aus der Psychologie und Philosophie. pp. 157–165. Springer-Verlag Berlin. Heidelberg.

Herwig-Lempp, Johannes (2007): Ressourcen im Umfeld: Die VIP-Karte. In: Michel-Schwartz, Brigitta (ed.): Methodenbuch Soziale Arbeit. Basiswissen für die Praxis. pp. 207–226. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. Wiesbaden.

Herwig-Lempp, Johannes (2016): Ressourcenorientierte Teamarbeit. Systemische Praxis in der kollegialen Beratung. Ein Lern- und Arbeitsbuch. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Hofmann, Anjuna/Kohler, Stefan (2013): Motivierende Gesprächsführung als Kurzintervention bei jungen Menschen mit auffälligem Alkoholkonsum. In: Abhängigkeiten 1/13. pp. 85–106.

Hoch, Roman (2022): Systemische Traumabehandlung. Weinheim/Basel. Beltz.

Hochschule Esslingen (2021): Erfahrungsräume öffnen – Demokratie gestalten: Die KiSSeS-Strategie in der Praxis. URL: https://www.agj-f-sachsen.de/files/Downloads-Dokumente/Projekte/MUT%20Publikationen/Handreichung_KiSSeS-in-der-Praxis.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Honneth, Axel (2003): Kampf um Anerkennung. Zur moralischen Grammatik sozialer Konflikte. Suhrkamp. Frankfurt am Main.

Hourani, Albert (2014): Die Geschichte der arabischen Völker. Weitererzählt bis zum Arabischen Frühling von Malise Ruthven. S. Fischer Verlag. Frankfurt am Main.

Höbl, Stefan E. (2019): Diskriminierung und Radikalisierung – Zwei Seiten einer Medaille? In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb). URL: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/infodienst/295672/diskriminierung-und-radikalisierung/#node-content-title-0> (accessed: 25 August 2023)

Isaacs, William (2002): Dialog als Kunst gemeinsam zu denken. Edition Humanistische Psychologie (EHP). Bergisch Gladbach.

Jasch, Michael (2021): Vernetzte Sicherheit? Zusammenarbeit zwischen Polizei, Nachrichtendiensten und Zivilgesellschaft. In: Ligante. Fachdebatten aus der Präventionsarbeit. 4th edition. pp. 35–39. BAG RelEx. Berlin.

Jegodtka, Renate/Luitjens, Peter (2016): Systemische Traumapädagogik – Traumasensible Begleitung und Beratung in psychosozialen Arbeitsfeldern. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Jokisch, Benjamin (2014): “Salafistische” Strömungen im vormodernen Islam. In: Ceylan, Rauf/Jokisch, Benjamin (eds): Salafismus in Deutschland. Entstehung, Radikalisierung und Prävention. pp. 15–36. Peter Lang. Frankfurt am Main.

Joyce, Phil/Sills, Charlotte (2015): Gestalttherapeutische Kompetenzen für die Praxis. EHP Verlag. Vienna.

Von Kibéd, Matthias Varga/ Sparrer, Insa (2020): Ganz im Gegenteil. Tetralemmarbeit und andere Grundformen systemischer Strukturaufstellungen – für Querdenker und solche, dies es werden wollen. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Keupp, Heiner (2000): Identität. In: Spektrum, Lexikon der Psychologie. URL: <https://www.spektrum.de/lexikon/psychologie/identitaet/6968> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Kiefer, Michael (2021): Radikalisierungsprävention in Deutschland – Ein Problemaufriss. In: Zick, Andreas/Freiheit, Manuela (2021): MAPEX: Radikalisierungsprävention in Deutschland – Mapping und Analyse von Präventions- und Distanzierungsprojekten im Umgang mit islamistischer Radikalisierung. pp. 29–45. URL: https://www.mapex-projekt.de/documents/MAPEX_Buch_Radikalisierungspraevention_in_Deutschland.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Kindl-Beilfuß, Carmen (2019): Fragen können wie Küsse schmecken – Systemische Fragetechniken für Anfänger und Fortgeschrittene. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Kirsch, Holger/Bauer, Annemarie (2017): Psychodynamische Perspektiven in der Sozialen Arbeit. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Kleve, Heiko (2011): Aufgestellte Unterschiede. Systemische Aufstellung und Tetralemma in der Sozialen Arbeit. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Klingenberg, Hubert/Ramsauer, Erika (2017): Biografarbeit als Schatzsuche. Grundlagen und Methoden. Don Bosco Medien. Munich.

Köttig, Michaela (2014): (Biografisch-)Narratives Arbeiten in der Einzel- und Gruppenarbeit. In: Baer, Silke/Möller, Kurt/Wiechmann, Peer (eds): Verantwortlich Handeln: Praxis der Sozialen Arbeit mit rechtsextrem orientierten und gefährdeten Jugendlichen. pp. 117–128. Verlag Barbara Budrich. Berlin.

Krafeld, Franz Josef/Möller, Kurt/Müller, Andrea (1993): Jugendarbeit in rechten Cliques. Ansätze – Erfahrungen – Perspektiven. Edition Tremmen. Bremen.

Kulaçatan, Meltem (2020): Geschlechterrelevante Attraktivitätsmerkmale im Kontext islamistischer Radikalisierung. In: Amipur, Katajun (ed.): MuslimInnen auf neuen Wegen. Interdisziplinäre Gender Perspektiven auf Diversität. pp. 119–140. Ergon. Baden-Baden.

Kuschel, Hanna (2016): Achtsamkeit. In: Frey, Dieter (ed.): Psychologie der Werte. Von Achtsamkeit bis Zivilcourage – Basiswissen aus der Psychologie und Philosophie. pp. 13–24. Springer-Verlag Berlin. Heidelberg.

Kübler-Ross, Elisabeth (1997): On Death and Dying. Scribner. New York.

Kümmelmann, Maraike (2009): Ressourcenaktivierung mit der Time-Line. In: Kontext, Zeitschrift für Systemische Perspektiven 40/2. pp. 167–173.

Küpper, Beate/Zick, Andreas (2015): Gruppenbezogene Menschenfeindlichkeit. In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. URL: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/rechtsextremismus/dossier-rechtsextremismus/214192/gruppenbezogene-menschenfeindlichkeit/>

[menschenfeindlichkeit/](#) (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Laabdallaoui, Malika/Rüschhoff, Ibrahim (2009): Ratgeber für Muslime bei psychischen und psychosozialen Krisen. Edition Bukhara. Bonn.

Lammers, Maren (2016): Emotionsbezogene Psychotherapie von Scham und Schuld – Das Praxishandbuch. Schattauer. Stuttgart.

Lammers, Maren (2020): Scham und Schuld – Behandlungsmodule für den Therapiealltag. Schattauer. Stuttgart.

Lammers, Maren/Ohls, Isgard (2017): Mit Schuld, Scham und Methode – Ein Selbsthilfebuch. Balance. Cologne.

Le Bon, Gustave (1912 [1895]): Die Psychologie der Massen. Translated from the French by Rudolf Eisler. 2nd edition. Leipzig.

Levold, Tom/Wirschig, Michael (eds) (2020): Systemische Therapie und Beratung. Das große Lehrbuch. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Lindemann, Holger (2020): Systemisch-lösungsorientierte Gesprächsführung in Beratung, Coaching, Supervision und Therapie – Ein Lehr-, Lern- und Arbeitsbuch für Ausbildung und Praxis. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Lieser, Caroline (2014): Systemisches Coaching und Selbstwert. Stärkung von Selbstwert anhand systemischer Methoden. In: Lieser, Caroline (ed.): Praxisfelder der systemischen Beratung. pp. 13–32. Springer Fachmedien. Wiesbaden.

Logvinov, Michail (2017): Salafismus, Radikalisierung und terroristische Gewalt. Erklärungsansätze – Befunde – Kritik. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.
Loth, Wolfgang (1998): Auf den Spuren hilfreicher Veränderungen. Das Entwickeln klinischer Kontrakte. modernes lernen. Dortmund.

Loth, Wolfgang/von Schlippe, Arist (2004): Die therapeutische Beziehung aus systemischer Sicht. In: PiD – Psychotherapie im Dialog 5/4. pp. 341–347.

Luerweg, Frank (2022): Empathie. In: Psychologie heute. URL: <https://www.psychologie-heute.de/leben/artikel-detailansicht/42084-empathie.html> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Ludewig, Kurt/Wilken, Ulrich (2000): Das Familienbrett: Ein Verfahren für die Forschung und Praxis mit Familien und anderen sozialen Systemen. Verlag für Psychologie. Göttingen/Bern/Toronto/Seattle. Hogrefe.

Luhmann, Niklas (1984/1996): Soziale Systeme. Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie. Suhrkamp. Frankfurt am Main.

Madubuko, Nkechi (2021): Praxishandbuch Empowerment. Rassismuserfahrungen von Kindern und Jugendlichen begegnen. Beltz Juventa. Weinheim.

Marks, Stephan (2011): Scham – die tabuisierte Emotion. Patmos. Eschbach.

Marmer, Elina (2018): Kritisches Weißsein als Perspektivwechsel und Handlungsaufforderung. In: Blank, Beate/Gögercin, Süleyman/Sauer, Karin E./Schramkowski, Barbara (eds): Soziale Arbeit in der Migrationsgesellschaft. Grundlagen – Konzepte – Handlungsfelder. pp. 291–302. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.

Mauritz, Sebastian (2018): Schutzfaktor Religiosität. In: Resilienz Akademie. URL: <https://www.resilienz-akademie.com/schutzfaktor-religiositaet/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).
Mayer, Claude-Hélène (2019): Trainingshandbuch Interkulturelle Mediation und Konfliktlösung. Didaktische Materialien zum Kompetenzerwerb. 3rd edition. Waxmann Verlag. Münster.

Meilicke, Tobias/Schurbohm, Axel (2023): Zusammenarbeit zwischen Zivilgesellschaft und Sicherheitsbehörden aus einer zivilgesellschaftlichen Perspektive. In: Benz, Samira/Sotiriadis, Georgios (eds): Deradikalisierung und Distanzierung auf dem Gebiet des islamistischen Extremismus. Erkenntnisse der Theorie – Erfahrung aus der Praxis. pp. 209–226. Springer VS. Berlin.

Meilicke, Tobias/Weilnböck, Harald (2022): Sekundärprävention – Distanzierungsarbeit und

kommunale Verankerung. In: Rothenberger, Liane/Krause, Joachim/Jost, Jannis/Frankenthal, Kira (eds): Terrorismusforschung – Interdisziplinäres Handbuch für Wissenschaft und Praxis. pp. 587–594. Nomos-Verlag. Baden-Baden.

Messmer, Heinz (2003): Der soziale Konflikt. De Gruyter. Stuttgart.

Michel, Christian/Novak, Felix (2004): Kleines Psychologisches Wörterbuch. Herder Spektrum. Freiburg.

Miller, William R./Rollnick, Stephen (2015): Motivierende Gesprächsführung. Motivational Interviewing. 3rd edition of the standard work in German. Lambertus. Freiburg im Breisgau.

Mokros, Nico/Pangritz, Johanna (2021): Das Konzept der Gruppenbezogenen Menschenfeindlichkeit. In: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (ed.): Deradikalisierungs- und Distanzierungsarbeit. Begleitbuch zum Qualifizierungslehrgang (Umfeld-)Beratung im Phänomenbereich islamistisch begründeter Extremismus. Beiträge zur Migration und Integration. Volume 9. pp. 27–30. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF). Nuremberg.

Möller, Kurt (2014): Gegenstandswissen, Praxis, Strukturen – Welche Erkenntnisse liegen vor, welche Desiderate und Handlungsperspektiven sind Erfolg versprechend? In: Baer, Silke/Möller, Kurt/Wiechmann, Peer (eds) (2014): Verantwortlich Handeln: Praxis der Sozialen Arbeit mit rechtsextrem orientierten und gefährdeten Jugendlichen. pp. 337–350. Verlag Barbara Budrich. Berlin.

Nedza, Justyna (2014): “Salafismus” – Überlegungen zur Schärfung einer Analyse-kategorie. In: Said, Benham T./Fouad, Hazim (eds): Salafismus. Auf der Suche nach dem wahren Islam. In: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb). Volume 1454. pp. 80–105. Herder. Freiburg im Breisgau.

Nelle, Mathias (2021): Supervision. In: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) (ed.) (2021): Deradikalisierungs- und Distanzierungsarbeit. Begleitbuch zum Qualifizierungslehrgang (Umfeld-)Beratung im Phänomenbereich

islamistisch begründeter Extremismus. Beiträge zur Migration und Integration. Volume 9. pp. 205–2010. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF). Nuremberg.

Neumann, Peter (2017a): Was wir über Radikalisierung wissen – und was nicht. In: Kärger, Jana (ed.): “Sie haben keinen Plan B”. Radikalisierung, Ausreise, Rückkehr – zwischen Prävention und Intervention. pp. 42–56. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Bonn.

Neumann, Peter (2017b): Der Terror ist unter uns. Dschihadismus und Radikalisierung in Europa. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Bonn.

Oberzaucher-Tölke, Inga (2018): Beratung und Therapie in der Migrationsgesellschaft. In: Blank, Beate/Gögercin, Süleyman/Sauer, Karin E./Schramkowski, Barbara (eds): Soziale Arbeit in der Migrationsgesellschaft. Grundlagen – Konzepte – Handlungsfelder. pp. 657–666. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.

Oehlmann, Jamuna/Schurbohm, Axel (2021): Eine zivilgesellschaftliche Perspektive auf die Zusammenarbeit mit Sicherheitsbehörden – Haltung, Strukturen, rechtlicher Rahmen. In: Ligante. Fachdebatten aus der Präventionsarbeit (2021): Zur Sicherheit: Prävention? 4th ed. pp. 48–51.

Orth, Ulrich/Robins, Richard W./Widaman, Keith F. (2012): Life-span development of self-esteem and its effects on important life outcomes. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 102/6.

Ostwaldt, Jens/Coquelin, Mathieu (2018): Radikalisierung – Theoriemodelle für die Praxis. In: Forum Kriminalprävention 02/2018. pp. 10–13. Zeitschrift der Stiftung Deutsches Forum Kriminalprävention. Bonn.

Pates, Rebecca/Schmidt, Daniel/Karawanskij, Susanne (eds) (2010): Antidiskriminierungspädagogik. Konzepte und Methoden für die Bildungsarbeit mit Jugendlichen. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.

Patrzek, Andreas/Scholer, Stefan (2018): Systemisches Fragen in der kollegialen Beratung. Beltz. Weinheim/Basel.

Paul, Chris (2021): Ich lebe mit meiner Trauer. Das Kaleidoskop des Trauerns für Trauernde. 2nd edition. Gütersloher Verlagshaus. Gütersloh.

Peichl, Jochen (2019): Hypno-analytische Teilarbeit – Ego-State-Therapie mit inneren Selbstanteilen. 3rd edition. Klett-Cotta. Stuttgart.

Pesseschian, Nossrat (1979): Der Kaufmann und der Papagei. Orientalische Geschichten in der Positiven Psychotherapie. Fischer Taschenbuch. Frankfurt am Main.

Pfahl-Traugher, Armin (2011): Islamismus – Was ist das überhaupt? Definition, Merkmale, Zuordnungen. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. URL: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/islamismus/dossier-islamismus/36339/islamismus-was-ist-das-ueberhaupt/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Pfalzkllinikum (n.d.): Der Ort der Geborgenheit. URL: https://www.pfalzkllinikum.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Meditationsuebungen/Ort_der_Geborgenheit_Meditation.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Pohl, Sarah/Dichtel, Isabella (2021): Alles Spinner oder was? Wie Sie mit Verschwörungsgläubigen gelassener umgehen. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Poscheschnik, Gerald/Traxl, Bernd (eds) (2016): Handbuch Psychoanalytische Entwicklungswissenschaft. Theoretische Grundlagen und praktische Anwendungen. Book series: Psychodynamische Therapie. Psychosozial-Verlag. Gießen.

Potreck-Rose, Friederike/Jacob, Gitta (2021): Selbstzuwendung, Selbstakzeptanz, Selbstvertrauen – Psychotherapeutische Interventionen zum Aufbau von Selbstwertgefühl. 13th edition. Klett-Cotta. Stuttgart.

Radatz, Sonja (2010): Einführung in das systemische Coaching. 4th edition. Carl-Auer

Verlag. Heidelberg.

Radatz, Sonja (2018): Beratung ohne Ratschlag. Systemisches Coaching für Führungskräfte und BeraterInnen. Ein Praxishandbuch mit den Grundlagen systemisch-konstruktivistischen Denkens, Fragetechniken und Coachingkonzepten. 10th, unchanged edition. Literatur VSM. Wolkersdorf.

Rau, Thea/Kliemann, Andrea/Ohlert, Jeannine/Allroggen, Marc/Jörg M. Fegert (2019): Gefährdungsmomente im Zusammenhang mit religiös motivierter Radikalisierung Handlungsempfehlung für (sozial-) pädagogische Fachkräfte. Zeitschrift für Kindschaftsrecht und Jugendhilfe. Volume: 14, Issue: 4th pp. 128–136.

Reddemann, Luise (2016): Imagination als heilsame Kraft. Zur Behandlung von Traumafolgen mit ressourcenorientierten Verfahren. 19th edition. Klett-Cotta. Stuttgart.

Reddemann, Luise (2017): Dem “inneren Kind” begegnen. Audio CD with resource-orientated exercises. Klett-Cotta. Stuttgart.

Rechenberg-Winter, Petra (2017): Trauer in Familien – wenn das Leben sich wendet. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Rhodes, Jean/Liang, Belle/Spencer, Renée (2009): First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships. In: Professional Psychology: Research and Practice 40/5. pp. 452–458. URL: <https://rhodeslab.org/files/EthicsAPA.pdf> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Riexinger, Martin (2007): Islamismus und Fundamentalismus. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. URL: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/islamismus/dossier-islamismus/36341/islamismus-und-fundamentalismus/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Rigotti, Carlotta/Weatherburn, Amy/De Hert, Paul (2019): EXIT Europe Deliverable 6.1 Data Protection and Legal Framework. Vrije Universiteit Brussel. URL: https://cris.vub.be/ws/portalfiles/portal/50060977/EXIT_Europe_D6.1_Data_Protection_and_Legal_Framework_v1.0_2.pdf

(accessed: 25 August 2023).

Rogers, Carl R. (2016): Die klientenzentrierte Gesprächspsychotherapie. Client-Centred Therapy. 20th edition. Fischer Taschenbuch. Frankfurt am Main.

Rommelspacher, Birgit (2011): Was ist eigentlich Rassismus? In: Melter, Claus/Mecheril, Paul (eds): Rassismuskritik. Volume 1: Rassismustheorie und -forschung. 2nd edition. pp. 25–38. Wochenschau Verlag. Schwalbach/Ts.

Rommelspacher, Birgit (2002): Anerkennung und Ausgrenzung. Deutschland als multikulturelle Gesellschaft. Campus Verlag. Frankfurt am Main.

Rosenberg, Marshall B. (2016): Gewaltfreie Kommunikation. Eine Sprache des Lebens. 12th, revised and expanded edition. Junfermann Verlag. Paderborn.

Rothballer, Marc (2018): Beziehung wirkt! Professionelle Beziehungsarbeit in der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe. In: Arbeitshilfen zum Jugendschutz 2/2018. pp. 13–17.

Röhrbein, Ansgar (2019): Und das ist noch nicht alles. Systemische Biografiearbeit. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Rushdie, Salman (2019): Scham und Schande. Piper. Munich.

Satir, Virginia (2010): Kommunikation – Selbstwert – Kongruenz. Konzepte und Perspektiven familientherapeutischer Praxis. 8th edition. Junfermann Verlag. Paderborn.

Satir, Virginia (1994): Familienbehandlung: Kommunikation und Beziehung in Theorie, Erleben und Therapie. 9th, unchanged edition. Lambertus-Verlag. Freiburg im Breisgau.

Scherr, Albert (2016): Diskriminierung. Wie Unterschiede und Benachteiligungen gesellschaftlich hergestellt werden. 2nd, revised edition. Springer VS. Wiesbaden.

Scherr, Albert (2010): Diskriminierung und soziale Ungleichheiten. Erfordernisse und

Perspektiven einer ungleichheitsanalytischen Fundierung von Diskriminierungsforschung und Antidiskriminierungsstrategien. In: Hormel, Ulrike/Scherr, Albert (eds): Diskriminierung. Grundlagen und Forschungsergebnisse. pp. 35–60. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. Wiesbaden.

Schlee, Jörg (2019): Kollegiale Beratung und Supervision für pädagogische Berufe. Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe. Ein Arbeitsbuch. Kohlhammer Verlag. Stuttgart.

Von Schlippe, Arist/El Hachimi, Mohammed/Jürgens, Gesa (2013): Multikulturelle systemische Praxis – Ein Reiseführer für Beratung, Therapie und Supervision. 4th, expanded edition. Carl-Auer. Heidelberg.

Von Schlippe, Arist/Schweitzer, Jochen (2016): Lehrbuch der systemischen Therapie und Beratung I – Das Grundlagenwissen. 3rd, unchanged edition. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Schmitz, Dominic Musa (2016): Ich war ein Salafist. Meine Zeit in der islamistischen Parallelwelt. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Bonn.

Schneider, Gerd/Toyka-Seid, Christiane (2023): Religion. In: Das junge Politik-Lexikon von www.hanisauland.de. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Bonn. URL: <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/das-junge-politik-lexikon/321041/religion/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Schneider, Jakob Robert (2016): Herkunft, Schicksal und Freiheit – Das Gruppenunbewusste in Familiensystemen und Familienaufstellungen. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Schnoor, Heike (2012): Psychodynamische Beratung: Ein Anwendungsgebiet der Psychoanalyse. In: Schnoor, Heike (ed.): Psychodynamische Beratung. pp. 21–35. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Schroeter-Rupierer, Mechtild (2021): Praxisbuch Trauergruppen. Grundlagen und kreative Methoden für Erwachsene, Jugendliche und Kinder. 4th edition. Parnos Verlag. Ostfildern.

Schubert, Klaus/Klein, Martina (2018): Das Politiklexikon, Begriffe – Fakten – Zusammenhänge. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Bonn.

Schulz von Thun, Friedemann (1998): Miteinander reden 3: Das "Innere Team" und situationsgerechte Kommunikation: Kommunikation, Person, Situation. Rowohlt Verlag. Hamburg.

Schulz von Thun, Friedemann (2021): Der Mensch als pluralistische Gesellschaft. Das Modell des Inneren Teams als Haltung und Methode. In: Schulz von Thun, Friedemann/Stegemann, Wibke (eds): Das Innere Team in Aktion, Praktische Arbeit mit dem Modell. Rowohlt Verlag. Hamburg.

Schwing, Rainer/Fryszner, Andreas (2015): Systemische Beratung und Familientherapie. Kurz, bündig, alltagstauglich. 4th, unchanged edition. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Schwing, Rainer/Fryszner, Andreas (2018): Systemisches Handwerk. Werkzeug für die Praxis. 9th, unchanged edition. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Seidensticker, Tilman (2016): Islamismus. Geschichte, Vordenker, Organisationen. 4th, revised and updated edition. C. H. Beck. Munich.

Simon, Fritz B. (2017): Einführung in Systemtheorie und Konstruktivismus. 8th edition. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Sischka, Kerstin (2020): Die Rolle von Psychotherapie in der Ausstiegsbegleitung und Deradikalisierung. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb). URL: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/infodienst/311879/zur-rolle-von-psychotherapie-in-der-ausstiegsbegleitung-und-deradikalisierung/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Slama, Brahim Ben (2020): Die psychologische Dimension von Radikalität, Extremismus und Terrorismus. In: Slama, Ben Brahim/Kemmesies, Uwe E. (eds): Handbuch Extremismusprävention. Gesamtgesellschaftlich. Phänomenübergreifend. Volume 54. pp. 313–349. Bundeskriminalamt. Wiesbaden. URL: <https://www.handbuch-extremismuspraevention.de/HEX/DE/Handbuch/>

Kapitel_3/Modul_3_3/Modul_3_3.html (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Spektrum, Lexikon der Psychologie (2000): Bindung. URL: <https://www.spektrum.de/lexikon/psychologie/bindung/2401> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Stahl, Stefanie (2020): So stärken Sie Ihr Selbstwertgefühl. Damit das Leben einfach wird. 5th edition. Kailash. Munich.

Stangl, Werner (2022): Selbstwertgefühl. Online Lexikon für Psychologie und Pädagogik. URL: <https://lexikon.stangl.eu/627/selbstwertgefuehl/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Stangl, Werner (2023): Dissoziation. Online Lexikon für Psychologie & Pädagogik. URL: <https://lexikon.stangl.eu/872/dissoziation/> (accessed: 26 April 2023).

Taubert, André/Hantel, Christian (2017): Intervention durch Beratungsstellen – Die Arbeit der Beratungsstellen zu religiös begründetem Extremismus. In: Kärger, Jana (ed.): "Sie haben keinen Plan B". Radikalisierung, Ausreise, Rückkehr – zwischen Prävention und Intervention. pp. 238–251. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Bonn.

Thomsen, Margrit Helle (2012): Preventing Extremism: A Danish Handbook Series. Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration. Copenhagen.

Thomsen, Tamara/Lessing, Nora/Greve, Werner/Dresbach, Stefanie (2018): Selbstkonzept und Selbstwert. In: Lohaus, Arnold (ed.): Entwicklungspsychologie des Jugendalters. pp. 91–112. Springer-Verlag. Berlin.

Tietze, Kim-Oliver (2021): Kollegiale Beratung. Problemlösungen gemeinsam entwickeln. Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag. Hamburg.

Traxl, Bernd (2017): Freie Radikale? – Aggression, Gewalt und Radikalisierung bei Kindern und Jugendlichen – eine Einführung. In: Traxl, Bernd (ed.): Aggression, Gewalt und Radikalisierung. Psychodynamisches Verständnis

und therapeutisches Arbeiten mit Kindern und Jugendlichen. pp. 7–22. Brades & Apfel. Frankfurt am Main.

Uhlmann, Milena/Weilnböck, Harald (2017): Thesenpapier zum Vortrag "Zum internationalen Stand der Extremismusprävention in Europa – Ansätze und Erfahrungen". 20 Prinzipien guter Praxis. URL: https://cultures-interactive.de/files/publikationen/Fachartikel/2017_Thesenpapier_Tagung%20bpb-lpb%20Mannheim_20-Prinzipien-guter-Praxis.pdf (accessed: 26 April 2023).

Universität Oldenburg (2009): Ungleiche Bildungschancen schon durch Vornamen? Studie zu Vorurteilen und Vorannahmen von Lehrern. Press release from 16 September 2009. URL: <https://www.presse.uni-oldenburg.de/mit/2009/390.html> (accessed: 26 April 2023).

Unterholzer, Carmen C. (2017): Es lohnt sich, einen Stift zu haben. Schreiben in der systemischen Therapie und Beratung. Carl-Auer Verlag. Heidelberg.

Violence Prevention Network e. V. (VPN) (ed.) (2020): Standards in der Beratung des sozialen Umfelds (mutmaßlich) islamistisch radikalisierten Personen. Handreichung des Beratungsstellen-Netzwerks der Beratungsstelle "Radikalisierung" des BAMF. 2nd, expanded edition. URL: https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Forschung/deradikalisierung-standardhandreichung-2020.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=10 (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Vogt, Manfred/Bexte, Bettina (n.d.): Familie Erdmann, 50 Therapiekarten und Poster. Manfred-Vogt-Spieleverlag.

Volger, Ingeborg (2014): Kernaufgaben und Identität tiefenpsychologischer Beratung – Schnittmengen und Grenzziehungen zur tiefenpsychologisch fundierten Psychotherapie. In: Schnoor, Heike (ed.): Psychodynamische Beratung in pädagogischen Handlungsfeldern. pp. 21–41. Psychosozial-Verlag. Gießen.

Votsmeier-Röhr, Achim/Wulf, Rosemarie (2017): Gestalttherapie. Wege der Psychotherapie. Ernst

Reinhardt Verlag. Munich.

Wagner, Elisabeth/Russinger, Ulrike (2016): Emotionsbasierte systemische Therapie. Intrapsychische Prozesse verstehen und behandeln. Klett-Cotta. Stuttgart.

Wagner, Hartmut/Küchler, Tom (2008): Motivierende Gesprächsführung. In: Gillich, Stefan (ed.): Bei Ausgrenzung Streetwork. Handlungsmöglichkeiten und Wirkungen. Triga. Gelnhausen.

Watzlawick, Paul/Beavin, Janet/Jackson, Don D. (2011): Menschliche Kommunikation – Formen, Störungen, Paradoxien. 12th, unchanged edition. Hogrefe.

Weilnböck, Harald (2022a): Distanzierungsarbeit 01.Grundlagen und methodische Leitlinien. Cultures interactive e. V. URL: https://www.cultures-interactive.de/files/publikationen/Flyer%20Broschueren%20Dokumentationen/2022_Distanzierungsarbeit_01.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Weilnböck, Harald/Örell, Robert/RAN Derad (2015): RAN Derad Declaration of Good Practice – Principles of Sustainable Interventions in Disengagement and Rehabilitation (Deradicalisation) from Involvement in Violent Extremism and Group Hatred. Radicalisation Awareness Network. URL: https://www.cultures-interactive.de/files/publikationen/Fachartikel/2015_Draft%20RAN%20Derad%20Declaration%20of%20Good%20Practice_Summary%20in%20progress.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Weilnböck, Harald (2022b): Von der Holocaust-Leugnung zum persönlichen Familientableau – Kleine Verlaufsvignette zu zwei Sitzungen von Narrativen Gesprächsgruppen an Schulen. In: Stumptner, Katrin (ed.): Gruppenanalytisch arbeiten mit Kindern und Jugendlichen. Impulse für eine kreative und vielfältige Praxis? pp. 96–109. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen.

Weinberger, Sabine (2013): Klientenzentrierte Gesprächsführung. Lern- und Praxisanleitung für psychosoziale Berufe. 14th, revised edition.

Beltz Juventa. Weinheim/Basel.

Werner, Emmy E./Smith, Ruth S. (2001): Journeys from Childhood to Midlife. Risks, Resilience and Recovery. Cornell University Press. Ithaca/London.

Wesuls, Ralf/Thurner-Dierolf, Ingeborg/Pester, Uwe/Dauber, Christa (2020): Praxisleitfaden zum Umgang mit Gewalt und aggressiven Verhaltensweisen. Professionelles Deeskalationsmanagement in Einrichtungen für betagte oder schwerstpflegedürftige Menschen, Menschen mit Demenz oder chronischen psychischen Erkrankungen. Published by Gerd Weissenbeger (Institut für professionelles Deeskalationsmanagement, ProDeMa). 3rd edition. Gerd Weissenbeger. Geislingen/Steige.

Wesuls, Ralf/Gehring, Georg/Kautz, Michael (2021): Praxisleitfaden zum Umgang mit Gewalt und aggressiven Verhaltensweisen. Präventive Deeskalationsstrategien für Mitarbeiter in öffentlichen Einrichtungen. Published by Gerd Weissenbeger (Institut für professionelles Deeskalationsmanagement, ProDeMa). 4th, revised edition. Gerd Weissenbeger. Geislingen/Steige.

Wiedl, Nina (2014): Geschichte des Salafismus in Deutschland. In: Said, Behnam T./F Eouad, Hazim (eds): Salafismus. Auf der Suche nach dem wahren Islam. pp. 411–441. Herder. Freiburg im Breisgau.

Wiedl, Nina (2021): Radikalisierungstheorien und -modelle. In: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (ed.): Deradikalisierungs- und Distanzierungsarbeit. Begleitbuch zum Qualifizierungslehrgang (Umfeld-)Beratung im Phänomenbereich islamistisch begründeter Extremismus. Beiträge zur Migration und Integration. Volume 9. pp. 48–57. URL: https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Forschung/Beitragsreihe/beitrag-band-9-deradikalisierungs-distanzierungsarbeit.pdf;jsessionid=6DC69F40DE40AC86FB1CAF43F6D0B499.internet282?__blob=publicationFile&v=8 (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Wienands, András (2016): Perspektiven systemischer Praxis. Die Begründung der Systemischen Praxis im Überblick. Berliner

Systeme Verlag. Berlin.

Wiktorowicz, Quintan (2006): Anatomy of the Salafi Movement. In: Studies in Conflict and Terrorism. Vol. 29. pp. 217–228.

Wirth, Jan V./Kleve, Heiko (2019): Familienbrett – Kurt Ludewig. In: Lexikon des systemischen Arbeitens. URL: <https://www.carl-auer.de/magazin/systemisches-lexikon/familienbrett> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Wolf, Doris (2020): Angst vor Therapieende? In: palverlag – praktisch anwendbare Lebenshilfen. URL: https://www.palverlag.de/therapie_ende.html (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Women/girls in violent extremism (WomEx) (2022): Why gender? Ein Projekt in Trägerschaft von Cultures interactive e. V. (2014–2015). URL: <https://www.womex.org/> (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Worden, William (2009): Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy. 4th edition. New York.

Wurmser, Léon (1998): Die Maske der Scham. Zur Psychoanalyse von Schamaffekten und Schamkonflikten. 3rd, extended edition. Springer-Verlag. Berlin/Heidelberg.

Wustmann, Corina (2018): Resilienz – Widerstandsfähigkeit von Kindern in Tageseinrichtungen fördern. Beiträge zur Bildungsqualität. Cornelsen Verlag. Berlin.

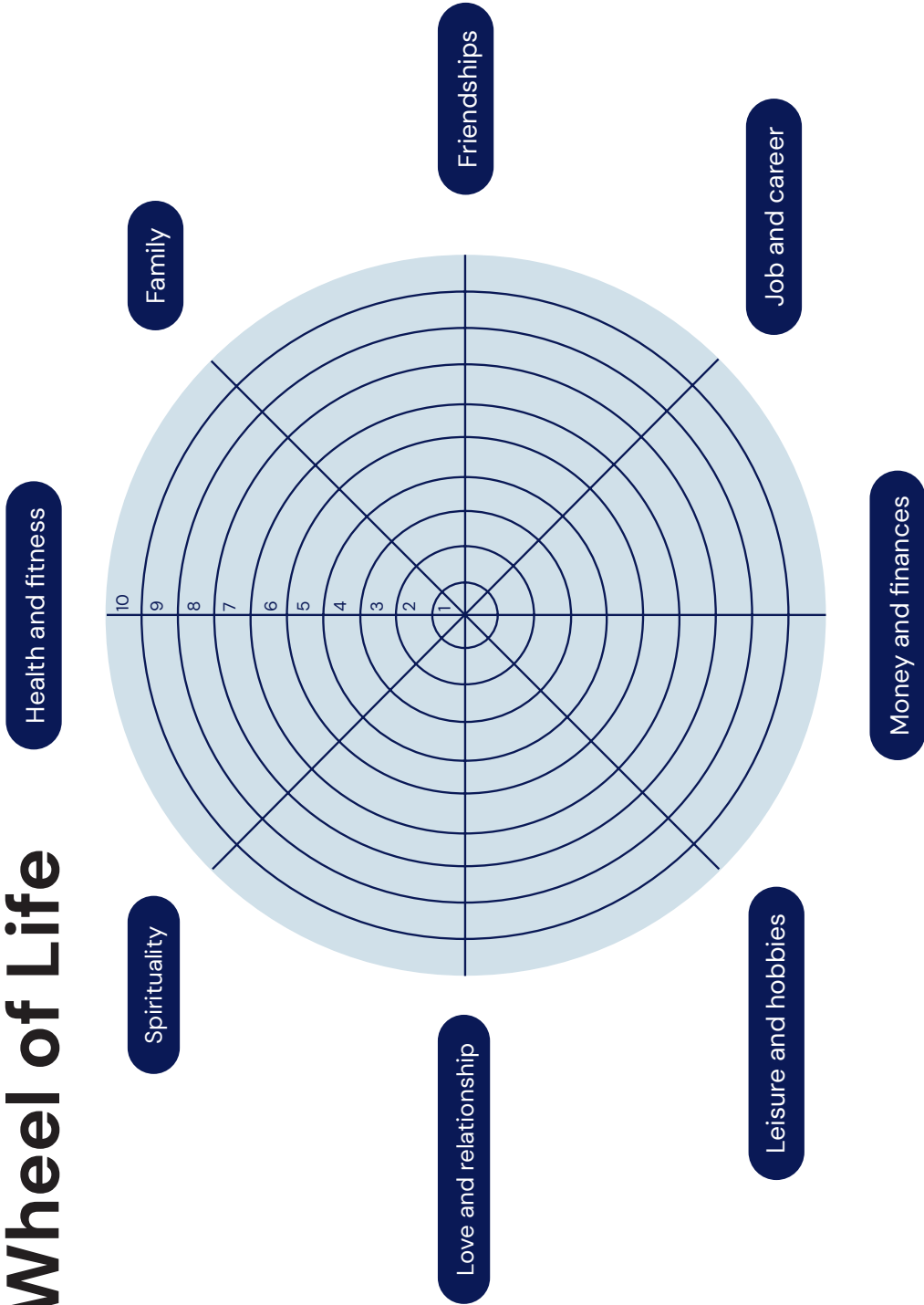
Wustmann, Corina (2005): Die Blickrichtung der neuen Resilienzforschung – Wie Kinder Lebensbelastungen bewältigen. In: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik 51/2. pp. 192–206. URL: https://www.pedocs.de/volltexte/2011/4748/pdf/ZfPaed_2005_2_Wustmann_Blickrichtung_Resilienzforschung_D_A.pdf (accessed: 25 August 2023).

Zick, Andreas/Böckler, Nils (2015): Radikalisierung als Inszenierung. Vorschlag für eine Sicht auf den Prozess der extremistischen Radikalisierung und die Prävention. In: Forum Kriminalprävention Extremismus und Prävention 3/2015. pp. 3–16.

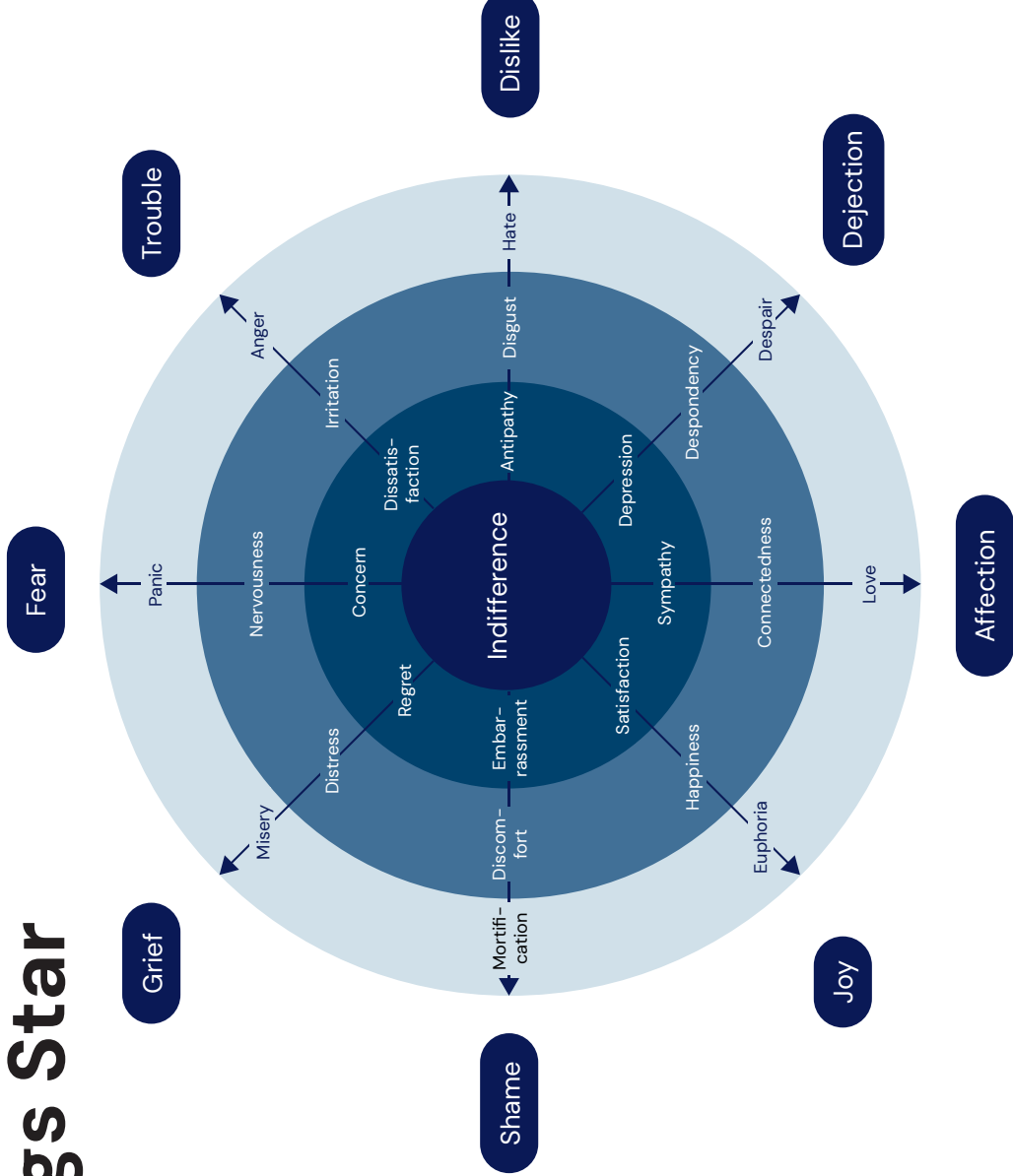
Templates



The Wheel of Life



The Feelings Star

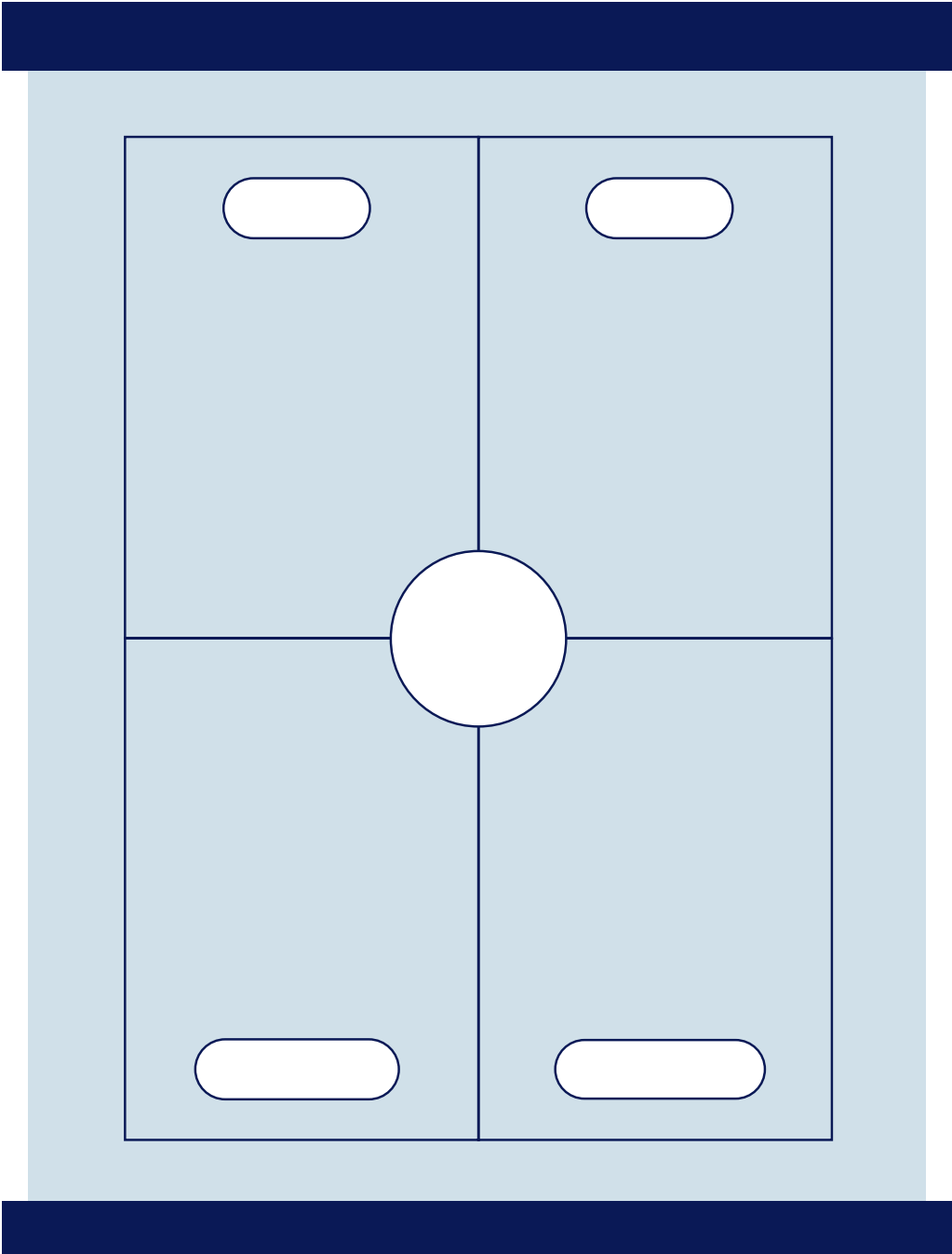


The Faith ABC

A	N
B	O
C	P
D	Q
E	R
F	S
G	T
H	U
I	V
J	W
K	X
L	Y
M	Z



The VIP Map



Resource Balance Sheet⁶⁵

When I think about the positive things in my childhood, I remember that I ...

What I appreciate about my sibling position in the family is ...

© The balance sheet exercise is taken from Röhrbein (2019: 87ff.) and has been slightly modified.

I have particularly fond memories of this person/these people ...

because ...

The resources, skills and strengths that I was able to develop are ...

I have learnt this from the following family members ...

[illegible]

Skills that helped us in our family to overcome difficulties and crises ...

[illegible]

Values and attitudes that characterise our family ...

[illegible]

Wishes for me and expectations of me that have encouraged me ...

[illegible]

Relationships in my family and circle of friends that were or are very important to me ...

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

People and situations that inspired me in my childhood and youth ...

[illegible]

People and situations that inspired and shaped me in my childhood and adolescence ...

[illegible]

I was (indirectly) supported in making a decision about further education/my job by ...

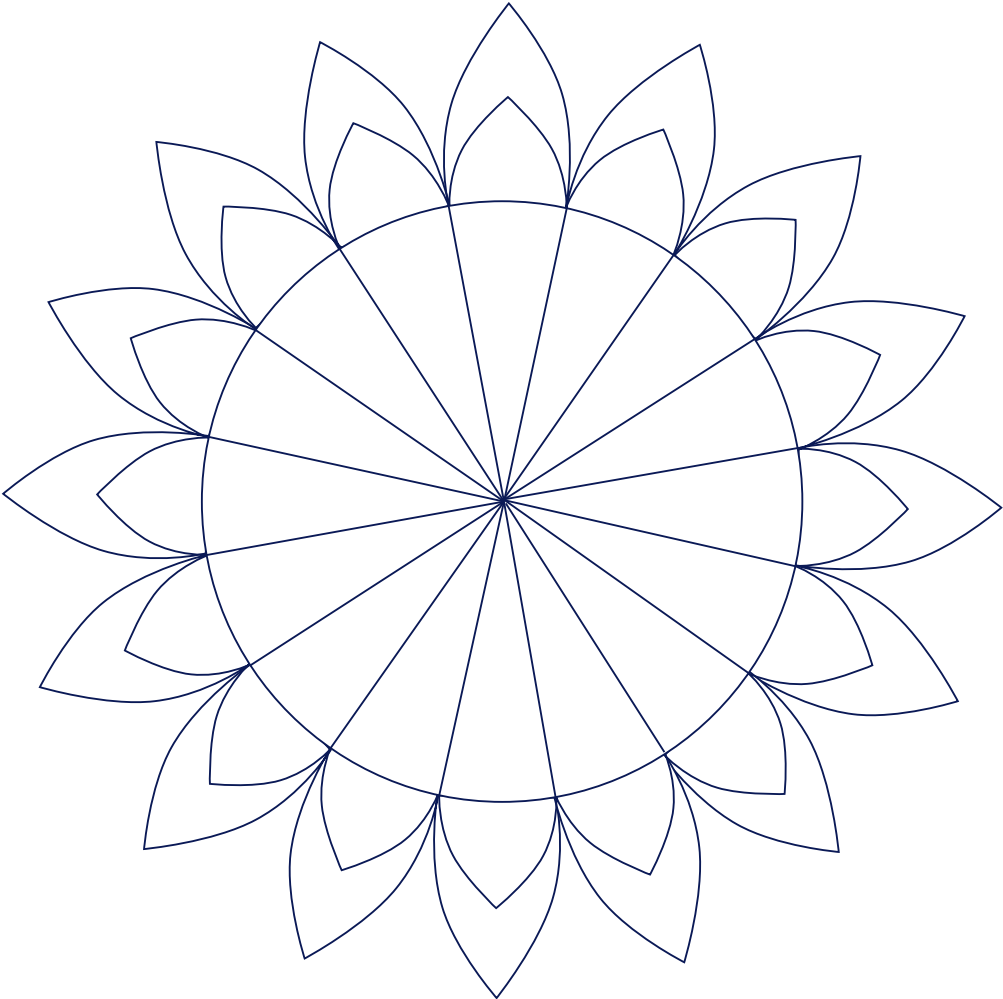
[illegible]

I like to think back on my childhood/adolescence because ...

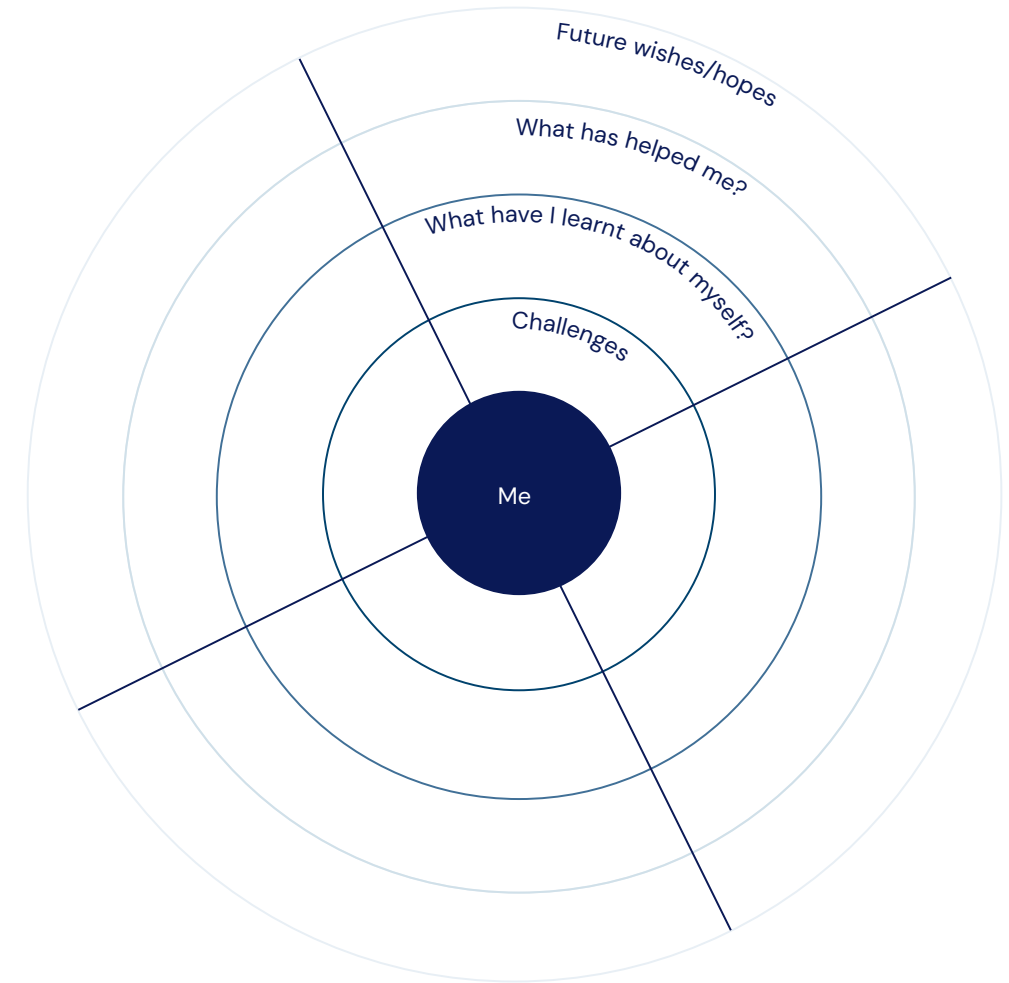
The challenges I encountered in my childhood and adolescence taught me ...

I am grateful to ... for ...

The Power Flower



Question							
PROs (YES)	Rating	Probability	Total	CONs (NO)	Rating	Probability	Total
Total				Total			



The publishers of this publication
are responsible for the content
and opinions expressed.

