

Mentoring in anti-radicalization

LTG: a systematic assessment, intervention and supervision tool in mentoring

Preben Bertelsen, Department of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences, Research Unit Life Psychology, Aarhus University

Mentoring and a non-extremist grip on life

In many countries, it is generally agreed that the measures to combat violent extremism and terrorism must be broad. A wide range of interventions is used: International collaboration between police and intelligence services, socio-economic and psychosocial interventions in local urban communities, early citizenship-building modules in primary and lower secondary school as well as specific initiatives in relation to individuals' network (family, friends, educational institution, etc.). One of the key psychosocial interventions that increasingly attracts international attention is the use of mentors.

In general, the mentoring process between mentor and mentee is about change and empowerment. The focus is on developing and establishing the mentee's grip on, e.g., education, work, specific life challenges or on life in general. This article is particularly concerned with how an illegal and violent grip on life can be transformed to a legal and non-violent grip.

A good mentoring process is characterized by two essential qualities, namely safety and challenge (in the psychological literature often termed confrontation) (Clutterbuck 2012, Poulsen 2012). As emphasized by Poulsen, safety is concerned with the fact that a mentee will usually always have something at stake. The mentee may have sensitive, and sometimes even dangerous, topic to talk about – involving, for instance, criminal activities or topics not spoken about outside the group that the mentee may be about to leave with the help

of a mentor. It is crucial for the mentoring process that the mentee feels safe to talk about such things, and that the mentor respects this by, e.g., honoring the duty of confidentiality and by dealing with these issues in a respectful and caring way (the duty of confidentiality may, however, be overruled by consideration for national security).

On the other hand, the whole idea of the mentoring process is, of course, transformation and change of perspective. As Clutterbuck puts it: The process of self-growth is at its strongest when people come to know and understand how others understand the world and life. In other words, a good relationship based on safety, including support and care, is necessary but not sufficient for good mentoring. The relation must be about something.

First of all, mentoring must have a purpose, a direction, which confronts the mentee's perspective on life and introduces the mentee to new, *meaningful* ways of *comprehending* and *managing* life (Antonovsky 2000). However, the meaningfulness not only concerns idiosyncratic attitudes and constructions at will. As will appear from the present article, personal meaningfulness is based on that which, all things considered, is *realistically* a meaningful human life.

Secondly, the concern of the mentoring presented here is about the management of life in illegal, violent and life-threatening extremist ways. Hence, the purpose and direction of mentoring is not just a question of what makes personal sense to the mentee. It is also about how the personal sense has *common meaning*, i.e., which consequences the individual's

personal sense have for all of us. This does not mean that, in this context, mentoring is about ideological and political control. On the contrary. It is not a matter of denying the mentee the right to put forward justified criticism of culture and society. It is, however, about mentoring, which, as a minimum, deals with the project of steering the mentee away from illegal and violent, extremist life trajectories and onto other trajectories, which will give voice to the mentee's potential indignation and criticism in a legal and non-violent way.

This also illustrates the difference between mentoring and coaching. Coaching is first and foremost a matter of building good relations and of using Socratic question-asking techniques to help the other to find his/her own personally meaningful answers to basic life questions. Apart from that, mentoring is about giving substantial advice, guidance and direction based on the mentor's solid knowledge of the area in which the mentee needs guidance to navigate. In the present article, models and tools will be presented, which provide the mentoring with substantial knowledge and directedness. I.E. the models and tools firstly are dealing with illegal and violent extremism in ways that can guide the mentoring process and, secondly, these models and tools may be subjected to empirical and evidence-based research.

2. Insecure life attachment, radicalization and extremism

The basics: Life, life tasks, and life skills.

The theoretical model that may provide mentoring with substance and directedness takes its point of departure in something which we all essentially strive to have: a good enough life for ourselves and each other [Little 1983-Emmons 1989, Bertelsen 2013)]. As stated

above: To create, maintain and develop a good enough life we must *comprehend* and *manage* the challenges life presents us with in a *meaningful* way.

Such challenges, or life tasks, fall into three categories [Bertelsen 2009, 2012, 2013). First, the life task of *participating* in own and common life, i.e.: (a) To be able to participate in the development of close relations with other people. (b) To be able to create a material framework for one's own life in accordance with own interests and projects (preferably in a social and collaborative manner). (c) To participate in a personal manner in larger communities and society.

Secondly, the life task of *attuning* individual conduct and activity to the surrounding world in a realistic way, i.e.: (a) Basically to be able to attune activities and participation to the specific situation by showing attentiveness and commitment. (b) To be able to attune in a pragmatic and considerate manner characterized by planning. (c) To be able to attune one's participation in an ethical way guided by norms and values.

Thirdly, the life task of *taking into perspective* projects in relation to own and common life in consideration of the practically infinite diversity of other possible perspectives on a good enough life. I.E. (a) in an empathic manner, to be able to familiarize oneself with how specific other people think, feel and are motivated for a good enough life. (b) Self-awareness, i.e., being aware of and understanding one's own thoughts, feelings and strivings regarding life. (c) Furthermore, empathy and self-insight are based on the fact that one is basically aware of cues in the surroundings, of what one sees, hears, etc., nonverbal cues from other people as well as felt senses in one's own body (Gendlin 1982). However, the life task of being able to take into one's own perspective specific other people's life perspectives in an empathic manner is not the only life task we are faced with when it

comes to being able to orientate ourselves in relation to the diversity of life perspectives (Singer). We are also faced with (d) the key task of being able to navigate (preferably deliberately and critically) in relation to the common good, requirements of and intentions behind the social rules, laws and institutions as well as being able to relate to the general humanistic, scientific and religious discourses concerning life.

These life tasks are *general human* tasks in the sense that they are challenges in the life of any human being, regardless of society and culture. For example, the task of building, maintaining and developing close relations to family and friends may differ to a great extent depending on the settings: whether you live in an extended nomad family on the Mongolian harsh steppes or among politicians in Washington. Therefore the relations and relation-building tasks may find expression in a multitude of different cultural and individual ways. But, *the fact that* we must be able to comprehend and manage relation-building tasks in a meaningful way applies to all of us regardless of culture and society. In the same way as, for instance, what is considered normative good behavior may vary on the surface indefinitely. However *the fact that* one must, one way or the other, attune to the common standards of the environment applies to all people.

Because of this indefinite variety, these life tasks must be identified as *generic* as well. For evident reasons, it is impossible to make an exhaustive list of all the specific life tasks we are facing in our everyday life or in connection

with the major choices in life in different cultures. For example, communities may differ to a great extent depending on whether they include 5-year-olds in a kindergarten, a group of 20-year-olds, elderly people having long been retired or for that matter depending on gender (whether the group consists of one gender, mixed genders, transgenders, etc.). Nevertheless, the specific tasks of forming communities may all be understood or *generated* on the basis of the same fundamental task: that of being included in and helping to build communities. In that the life tasks are defined as general human and generic tasks, a clear and systematic insight into the incredibly large variety of good enough lived lives can be obtained.

In order to handle the life tasks in a way that provides the basis for a good enough life, we need to have a similar set of general life skills for comprehending and managing the tasks in a meaningful way. Skills that make us capable of *participating* in, of *attuning* to the environment and of *taking into perspective* the multitude of individual and cultural pursuits for the good enough life. In line with the reasons stated above, these life skills must equally be defined as general human and generic skills. By means of a sufficiently developed and general educated basic skill for, for example, relating to a framework for one's own life, one may *generate* the very specific abilities required by diverse specific everyday challenges, such as one's personal and professional participation in a project at the workplace, the design of a kitchen or maintaining a steady circadian rhythm.

Life tasks & life skills	
<p>Participation Having a grip on life is about taking a position from which one can participate in own and common life.</p>	<p>1. Relations Participating in maintaining close social relations, i.e., family, close friends and peers</p>
	<p>2. Frames Participating in maintaining the framework of own life and interests; i.e., structure and material basis of everyday life in private, at work, in projects.</p>
	<p>3. Community Participating in maintaining communities; i.e., contributing in a personal way to the greater goods.</p>
<p>Realistic attunement Having a grip on life is about realistic pragmatic and moral attunement to natural, cultural and societal dimensions of the surrounding world</p>	<p>4. Attentiveness Operational attunement, i.e., accommodation and assimilation regarding one's activity, engagement, focus and presence according to the opportunities and conditions of the actual situation</p>
	<p>5. Pragmatics Pragmatic attunement, i.e., accommodation and assimilation regarding the realism of one's own plans in relation to the surrounding world</p>
	<p>6. Ethics Moral attunement, i.e., accommodation and assimilation regarding the realism of one's own norms and values relative to the morality of the surrounding world</p>
<p>Perspective taking Having a grip on life is about navigating according to the diversity of personal, cultural, and social perspectives on life.</p>	<p>7. Awareness Being aware of the here-and-now surroundings, nonverbal communication and felt senses (feelings).</p>
	<p>8. Reflection Taking into perspective one's own thoughts, feelings and motivation regarding life</p>
	<p>9. Empathy Taking into perspective other people's perspectives on life</p>
	<p>10. Navigation Taking into perspective the cultural, societal, ideological, religious and scientific perspectives on life</p>

Figure 1: General human life tasks and life skills

These fundamental concepts of the general human and generic life tasks and life skills provide mentoring with substance and direction. Furthermore, individual persons will not be subject to stigmatized exclusion because the model is about the ultimate concern for all of us: a good enough grip on life.

As mentioned, good mentoring is not just about non-directional relation-building without any other goal than the relation itself,

and certainly not about whether the mentor is free to follow own personal ideas about the matter and the good life. This is about the mentor needing to work with empowerment and building of general human capabilities for comprehending and managing life challenges in a meaningful way that is not illegal, violent - or life-threatening – for any of us.

A good enough grip on life implies a good enough match between life tasks and life skills.

The concept of a *good match* is inspired by Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow, but not including the special provision of this concept, i.e., being fully immersed and involved in the task at hand. The concept of a good enough match only denotes that the complexity and level of challenge of the life tasks are neither too large nor too small when considering the level of development of one's life skills. Following this a grip on life which is not good enough and does not contribute to building, maintaining or further developing own and common life, can be identified in one of two ways. If one's life tasks by far exceed one's skills, then the lack of match will be characterized by an *overwhelming shortage*. If one's life skills by far exceed the life tasks, one is offered the possibility of or allowed to participate in, attune to and navigate accordingly, then one will be in a state of *frustrating surplus*.

This is basically what mentoring is about: By having a solid knowledge of the tasks that the mentee must be able to comprehend and manage in a meaningful way, the mentor will be capable of matching tasks and skills. Perhaps by assisting the mentee in developing skills, perhaps by lowering or increasing the complexity of the tasks. But, as mentioned, the mentor is also responsible for looking at the *directedness* of the mentee. A mentee may be on a life track marked by a really good match between tasks and skills, and then at the same time this life trajectory may point to illegal and violent extremism. I.E. the life trajectory of the mentee may, in principle cause no problems, in so far as far as the life tasks and life skills are considered. The problem may be, however, that the life trajectory of the mentee has taken a problematic *direction*, e.g., the direction towards violent extremism. So, besides empowerment and change with regard to match/non-match between task and skill, it is important to understand that mentoring is also about directedness, and in this case directedness to violent extremism. And again: working with directedness must not be

confused with ideological and political control, but it must be about illegal and violent directedness of the mentee's skill by which his or her life challenges are comprehended, made meaningful and handled.

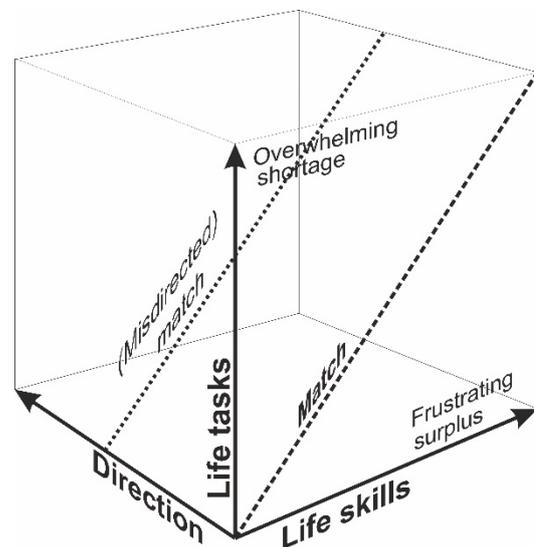


Figure 2: The figure illustrates the relations between life tasks and life skills. Furthermore, the figure illustrates that this relation may assume different kinds of directedness (e.g., from non-extremism to extremism).

The question therefore is: what does more precisely form and give direction to the mentee's grip on own and common life in a way that leads along extremist life trajectories? In the next section, we will take a closer look at (1) which root factors do in fact trigger an extremist attempt at (re-)constructing the grip on life, and (2) which factors form and give direction to this grip in this kind of extremist direction?

Radicalization and extremism in terms of secure vs insecure life attachment

In accordance with the approach of the present article, succeeding in having a good enough life is considered the overall project of a human life (Little 1983-Emmons 1989, Bertelsen 1994, Bertelsen 2000, Schmuk & Sheldon 2001, Little & Salmela-Aro 2007, Little 2007 Bertelsen 2013). This does not imply that such an overall project will always be on one's

mind, let alone immediately verbalized. But as an overall life project, it forms and gives direction to all our actions, the small-scale everyday ones (such as buying a bottle of milk) as well as the large-scale choices in life (choice of education, career, partner, finding accommodation, how to think about life, one's faith etc.).

This way of thinking about the good enough life has a long tradition within social and psychological literature. The concept of secure life attachment is related to Polanyi's (1957) sociological notion of being imbedded in a large context. Thus, secure life attachment means that one can be said to be securely, safely and meaningfully embedded in the world, in society, in large social communities and in the very close social networks of family and friends. Furthermore, the notion is related to Bowlby's (1988) notion of a secure base from which the individual explores the world, but also to which he or she returns for consolidation of the association with the close social base. In addition, the concept is related to Erikson's (1995) concept of fundamental trust, which basically describes the world as a good place to be, and close social communities and networks as predictable and reliable. The opposite is fundamental uncertainty and a lack of confidence in one's life conditions, as well as lack of insight into and knowledge of what can and should be done in order to obtain a good enough life. Thus, the concept of secure life attachment is also related to Laing's (1969) concept of ontological security about being able to live without anxiety and being able to live a meaningful life based on one's own choices, without the feeling of facing obscure or self-contradictory challenges. Giddens' (1991) concept of ontological security builds on Erikson's and Laing's concepts. Here, the main idea concerns confidence in order and coherence in the world, which makes it possible to live a safe life and to be able to act effectively, i.e., being able to reach realistic goals without risk. Finally, the concept of secure life attachment is also related with

Berger's (1967) concept of "sacred canopy". This notion refers to the overall discourse (moral, religious, scientific, economic, political), which makes sense and security in the world around us, makes the world intelligible to us, and enables us to act in our own and common life (see also Griffin 2012). Similarly, Kruglanski et al. (2012) have pointed to the fact that the fundamental life task is to come to agreement with one's place in the universe. If the possibility of realizing this goal is blocked or violated, people may react by defending and/or (re)constructing life.

These considerations are maintained by means of a concept of secure life attachment. In accordance with the above concept, this concept can be defined by one's experience of life as:

- *safe*: No fear or experience of any hostile or destructive intrusion that will destroy one's life
- *inclusive*: No fear or experience of being excluded from the community
- *reliable*: No fear or experience of unwanted or sudden changes in the fundamental values of life
- *fair*: No fear or experience of being subjected to intolerable injustice and lack of recognition
- *well-being*: No fear or experience of life being insufficient, not covering one's basic needs, realistic desires and hope for a good enough life.

An *insecure* life attachment will therefore be the result of a life, which is or is not to a certain extent perceived as insecure, excluding, unreliable and unfair, and without proper opportunities for well-being. Because people are basically actively relating to and changing their environment in accordance with their needs, desires, and hope, they will naturally act on and react to such insufficient fundamental life conditions. They will do so by attempting to (re-)construct life. *A life that has become characterized by an insecure attachment will – indeed should – make most people establish or re-establish safe life attachments by means of their general life skills.*

Consequently, it is now possible to propose a definition of the key concepts in the anti-radicalization model, or the mentor model, namely radicalization and extremism. Radicalization is usually defined as a process of gradual acceptance of extremist ideas and actions whereas extremism is not so easily defined. Schmid (2013) has made a comprehensive list of definitions, and throughout this list, the position of extremism is viewed as being far from mainstream and directed toward comprehensive and fundamental, social, cultural and/or societal changes in own and common life.

In continuation hereof, extremism may first of all be seen as an ultimate desire to construct a new kind of life. Or to re-construct life, either as it actually was in the past or as it is assumed to have been according to historical, political and/or religious narratives (Griffin 2012). Secondly, extremism is characterized by ultimate intolerance and uncompromising setting aside of the concern for human coexistence (Bertelsen 2013). The setting aside of the concern for a tolerant community and tolerant ways of life, which would otherwise include the vast majority of citizens in a secure life attachment that is understandable, meaningful and manageable.

Based on these considerations, extremism is here defined as *an intense desire for and/or pursuit of universal and comprehensive changes in own and common life socially, culturally and/or societally where the concern for human coexistence is set aside.* (Bertelsen 2016)

Extremism is very often defined as *violent* activism and terrorism, cf., for instance, Midlarsky (2012): "Political extremism [is] a certain political program [...] in relation to which individual freedom may be limited in view of the collective objectives, including mass murder of those who actually or potentially disagree with this program." Of this

we have experienced many cruel and evil examples. We must not, however, forget that many extremist movements strive to make fundamental and extreme life changes, where intolerance is reflected in the fact that life is lived in isolation in parallel societies (e.g., back-to-basics communities or religious communities), parallel societies which are nevertheless peaceful, legal and non-violent (Sedgwick 2012 & Bartlett LLP & Miller 2012 Neumann, 2013). Moskalenko & McCauley (2011) have pointed to a decisive difference between moving along non-violent radicalization trajectories and trajectories leading to violent extremism. Therefore, we must distinguish between non-violent and violent extremism.

In continuation of these considerations and definitions, good mentoring is here considered to be guided by a mindset that understands illegal and violent extremism as a - disordered - attempt at (re-)constructing a good enough grip on life and a secure life attachment by means of general human - but misdirected - life skills.

We will now take a closer look at the specific factors that may cause such a misdirection with regard to the life skills.

Radicalization, extremism and the directedness of life skills

In order to understand how a life trajectory may become radicalized and lead toward extremism, we must be able to identify how the mentee puts his life skills into play and the kind of life the skills are directed at. As mentioned, it will not suffice to assume that radicalization be based on a poor match between life skills and life tasks. In regard to extremism we will often be dealing with otherwise well-functioning people. These people know how to form their grip on life in a participating, attuning, and taking-into-perspective way characterized by rational and well-informed

choices as well as by a good match between tasks and skills. They know what they are doing, and they strive - like other people do - to have a life characterized by secure attachment. The problem is that the directedness of the life skills by means of which they seek to get a grip on life leads them along violent, extremist life trajectories. We will therefore take a closer look at the directedness of the life skills and at how people, by being agents in own and common life, provide their life skills with this kind of directedness.

According to McAdams (2015), to be an agent in the fullest sense is to take ownership of personal experience and to organize behavior for the future in the service of valued goals. Bandura suggests: "To be an agent is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances" (Bandura 2008), and: "The human capability to exert influence over one's functioning and the course of events by one's actions" (Bandura 2009).

Fully in line with these considerations and the model we are developing, the definition of

agency may be an agent in own and common life implies a good enough grip on life by *intentionally* being capable of applying general human life skills (Bertelsen 2013). As human beings, we not only have projects for our lives, we have also make arrangements in relation to the external possibilities and framing conditions of nature, culture and society already at hand. As pointed out by Heidegger (1967), intentionality is always double-sided: Seen from inside-out, we are directed *at* the world (Heidegger called it the *intentio* side of our intentions); seen from the outside-in, we are just as much directed *by* the world, i.e., our thinking, feelings, and motives are directed by the surrounding realities (Heidegger called it the *intentum* side of our intentions). Or, in short: we are always directed *at/by* the world (Bertelsen 2005, 2009, 2011).

The above abstract reflections can be simplified and operationalized in a model called the Basic Five of Life Psychology (BFL) (Bertelsen 2013).

Inside-out (intentio) Directed at the world	Outside-in (intentum) Directed by the world
<p>Want (empowering engagement, persistence regarding desires, strivings, wishes relevant to one's goals and life projects)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro: <i>Do you want to set/reach your goal?</i> • Contra: <i>do you also experience some reluctance to set/reach you goal?</i> • Alternative: <i>Should you change your goal?</i> <p>Ability: (empowering self-efficacy regarding know-that and know-how relevant to one's goals and life projects)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro: <i>Do you have the sufficient knowledge & skills to set/reach you goal?</i> • Contra: <i>What do you lack, what is difficult regarding setting/reaching your goal?</i> • Alternative: <i>Should you acquire new skills and knowledge regarding goal?</i> 	<p>External conditions (empowering conditions and possibilities regarding nature, societal infrastructure etc. relevant to one's goals and life projects)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro: <i>Do you recognize external conditions for setting/reaching your goal?</i> • Contra: <i>Are external changes required regarding setting/reaching your goal?</i> • Alternative: <i>Can you contribute to such changes?</i> <p>Being met: (empowering supporting relations and network regarding the social and relational structures relevant to ones goals and life projects)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro: <i>Do you get help & acknowledgement regarding setting/reaching your goal?</i> • Contra: <i>Do you lack help/acknowledgement regarding setting/reaching your goal?</i> • Alternative: <i>What should you do to be supported/helped?</i>
<p>Intentional activity</p> <p>Doing: (empowering activity and pursuit – actually doing something to reach one's goals)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro: <i>What are you in fact doing already, regarding setting/reaching you goal??</i> • Contra: <i>what prevents you from realizing your goal?</i> • Alternative: <i>Could you do anything different from what you usually do?</i> 	

Figure 3: The Basic Five of Life Psychology (BFL). As a number of the above questions are exploratory (pro, contra, alternative), this form can also be used in connection with motivational interviewing.

This model, BFL, gives us a detailed picture of how we form and direct our grip on own and common life in a personally motivating way. Directedness is not just a question of what we *want*, it is also a question of *our abilities*. If that which we want from our life is not supported by sufficiently developed and formed abilities, we will become less motivated. Conversely, we may actually know what it takes and how to act, but again: if we do not "want" it enough,

we will not be motivated enough. It may very well be that we both do want to do something with life and also have the capacity to do it. However, if sufficient external conditions are not at hand and/or if we are not met, helped and acknowledged by others - or if we cannot see how we can co-create the necessary conditions and helpful, acknowledging and cooperating relations – we will also become demotivated. Conversely, we may be offered excellent

external conditions, support, recognition and opportunities for collaboration, but if we cannot find the energy and persistence, are unable to or do not know what it takes to accept these opportunities, we will again become less motivated.

Thus, BFL is the tool that may show us the directedness and motivation behind the mentee's way of using his life skills. Since the tool identifies directedness and motivation, it may also show us how to change directedness and increase motivation. In other words, BFL

may serve as a guide for motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick 2002).

Risk factors and different life trajectories

We can now present an overall model of radicalization on the basis of the root factors of threatened life attachment and extremism based on the mechanism of general human life skills directed by BFL

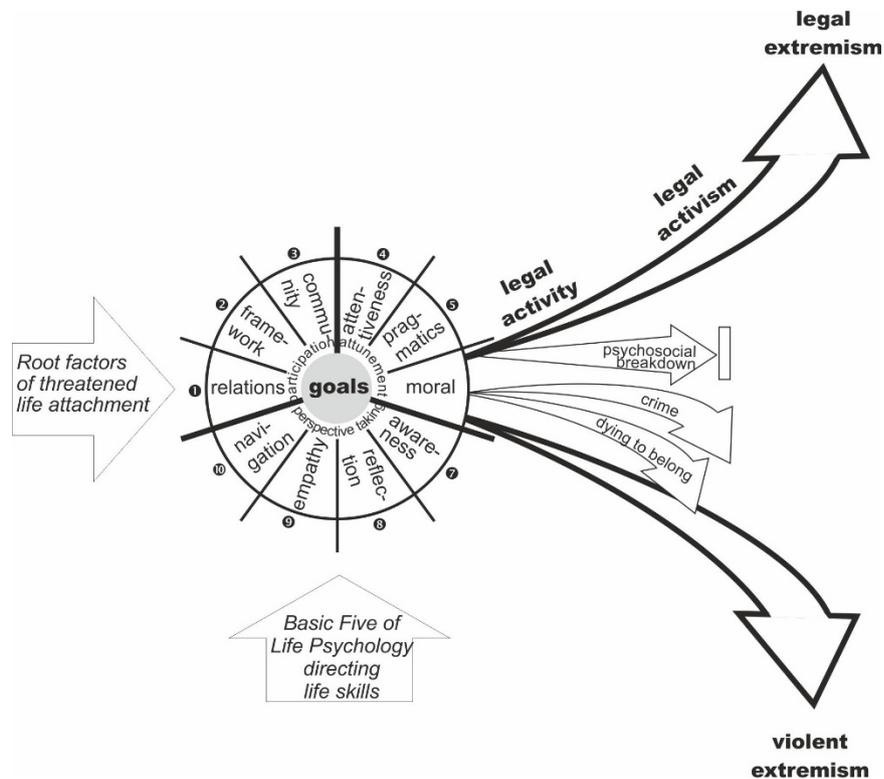


Figure 4. The model illustrates how the root factors of insecure life attachment may lead to different problematic life trajectories according to how the life skills are directed by the Basic Five of Life Psychology. It is worth noticing that here the life skills are presented as a Wheel Of Skills (WOS). This serves to illustrate that the skills open paths towards goals and life projects. Furthermore the circular arrangement of the skills illustrates that one can use this model to revolve around the goal and fully covering the goal by means of these skills.

As discussed above, humans have a natural tendency to act in order to construct or reconstruct a good enough life. The root factors of insecure life attachment trigger

actions ranging from non-radicalizing activities, which most people approach (i.e., situation-specific actions) to activism (a more comprehensive, political and/or religious

approach to life), as well as to more or less radicalized activism leading to extremism (extensive changes in own and common life regardless of the community), whether the kind of extremism will become legal nonviolent or illegal violent – as two different trajectories.

However, some people who are also exposed to endangered or more or less destroyed life attachment give up or lack the necessary basic life skills for being able to handle their life tasks. They easily enter paths characterized by *psychosocial breakdown*. Others insist on an individualistic (re-)construction in the form of criminal, personal gain or idiosyncratic, criminal activity-based hatred toward something or someone who might have caused the experienced non-flow. They move along the paths of *delinquency*. Some young people have great difficulty gaining any acceptance at all. They cannot even find a footing in criminal gangs or radicalized groups (Zierhoffer 2014) and are, so to speak, multi-excluded, which is why they desperately attempt to obtain some form or another of street credit, regardless of requirements or types of inspiration (copycats), and are highly propelled by what can be called "dying to belong" – by other authors termed: Dying to be popular (Siegel et al 2012) – or by a strong desire to gain significance (Kruglanski et al. 2014). In some young people, the so-called crossovers, the risk factors of psychosocial breakdown, delinquency and dying to belong combine. They are utterly exposed, have severe difficulty in getting a grip on life, and are dying to belong and therefore easily mobilized to violent extremism and terror acts. It is a kind of hostile and desperate violence where all of the above three paths regarding social failure, crime and multi-exclusion merge together (a so-called crossover) due to relatively weak life skills reinforced by a disturbed cognitive, dynamic and personal mirroring/idealizing style. Some young people legitimize crossovers with some kind of pseudo-jihadism or some other form of pseudo-religious or pseudo-political narrative, but, in fact, the

crossovers are results of a desperate striving for a good enough life embeddedness based on street credit without, however, any form of actual political or religious agenda.

To the proposed model shown in Figure 4, we may add a series of further risk factors proposed in the literature on extremism. These risk factors mainly fall into two categories: Social and societal factors and psychological factors. As will also appear from the model, these are moderating factors, i.e., factors that may strengthen the fundamental relation between root factors in the form of insecure life attachment and extremism.

The social factors can be subdivided into categories. First, factors associated with the *close relations*. Athur et al 2002 list the following *family relations* as risk factors:

- Family history of problem behaviour/parent criminality
- Family management problem/poor parental supervision and monitoring
- Poor family attachment/bonding
- Child victimization and maltreatment - pattern of high family conflict and/or violence
- Sibling antisocial behaviour
- Parental use of physical punishment/harsh and erratic discipline practices
- Low parent education level/illiteracy.

Also included are *friends and acquaintances as role models*, in particular antisocial peers. Athur et al 2002 list the following risk factors:

- Gang involvement or gang membership
- Peer alcohol and drug use
- Association with delinquent or aggressive peers

Secondly, we have *the immediate community*, and the role models found in the resident area. Furthermore we have the factors of what the

residential area does offer with regard to social activities, well-being, leisure time activities and active participation in the community. In particular, the risk factors associated with neighborhoods which have weak social control networks and which allow criminal and other antisocial activities to go unmonitored (Herrenkohl et al., 2001). Likewise, the school as part of the community may constitute a risk factor. Athur et al (2002) list the following risk factors:

- Low academic achievement/academic failure
- Negative attitude toward school/low bonding, low school attachment, low commitment to school
- Inadequate school climate/poorly organized and functioning schools/negative labelling by teachers
- School dropout

Thirdly, the factors related to society as such: the possibilities for thriving and participation through education and work, the experience of access to public authorities and institutions (Farington & Welsch 2007).

Furthermore, some researchers point to quite a number of psychological factors that may be involved as risk factors; in this case, increased awareness of cognitive factors. Cognitive style has been shown to be a risk factor of extremism (Kruglanski & Orehek 2012)]. This is related to the basic condition that people need some amount of cognitive certainty: To know who they are, how to behave, what to do and what to expect from other people and from the world as such (Hogg 2000, Hogg 2012).

The need for cognitive certainty may take the form of *need for closure*: The desire for firm answers to questions, problems and conflicts (Kruglanski & Webster 1996, Kruglanski & Orehek 2012) and is marked by two tendencies: Finding answers and solutions as quickly as possible and freezing”, i.e., staying

with one’s answers and beliefs as long as possible.

Furthermore, the need for cognitive certainty may take the form of *intolerance of ambiguity*: This notion was originally put forward by Frenkel-Brunswick (1949) who devised the concept of ambiguity intolerance. Bochner (1965) elaborated some key definitions of the concept: The cognitive need for certainty and unambiguity, i.e., preferring to take a black and white perspective on life and the inability to accept contradicting perspectives of life, as well as the inability to tolerate complex personalities, i.e., traits and behavior of another person going in different directions.

Finally, the need for cognitive certainty may show as *jumping to conclusion* (and action): This is the opposite of the need for cognition (Cacioppo et al 1986; Petty et al 2009). People who have a need for, or who enjoy, cognitive insight can easily spend a lot of time considering and having doubts about things. Such people tolerate a high degree of cognitive ambiguity and lack of cognitive closure. However, people who do not need elaborated and nuanced cognitive insight – but who are, on the other hand, in great need of cognitive closure – go for quick judgments and quick decisions based on as few cognitive efforts as possible, for example, only a small part of the Bible, the Koran, or various Hadiths. Another example is right-wing extremist persons who without critical reflection pick up a few distorted geopolitical catchphrases such as the "war between civilizations" based on which they look upon the world (in an extremist way) and justify the use of violence. This tendency of jumping to conclusions may even lead to here-and-now action based on very few pieces of information and little consideration. This kind of behaviour may be called "jump to action".

The mechanisms and factors that we have so far encountered are all about the overall relation between insecure life attachment and

extremism as such. As we have seen, it is crucial to be able to distinguish between extremists constructing their life activities (including, e.g., political and religious activities) in a legal and nonviolent manner, and extremists operating illegally and using violence (ultimately terrorism). A further mechanism to be introduced into the model is therefore quite obviously the readiness for violence, i.e., acceptance and use of violence as a means to reach a goal.

Stankov et al. (2010) found that an extremist militant mindset may consist of three kinds of belief: (a) “Violence is a useful option for reaching goals” (personal or social), (b) “We have an enemy” (e.g., the Western world or a corrupted and vile world), and (c) “The use of violence is sanctioned by a superior power” (God or the inevitable and absolute tendency of History).

As mentioned above, Siegel et al. (2012) demonstrate that personal uncertainty makes

some young people resort to quite dangerous self-destructive behaviour as a means to gain acknowledgement. They are willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of the group and even pay the ultimate price. So, actually the young people are not seeking self-destruction in the form of violent activism, terrorism and suicide bombing in itself, they just accept it in order to obtain recognition, popularity and a sense of belonging.

The overall model

We can now insert the last factor, readiness for violence into the model. Insecure life attachment may, depending on the capability of the general life skills to handle this, lead to violent extremism, but only if a readiness for violence is present.

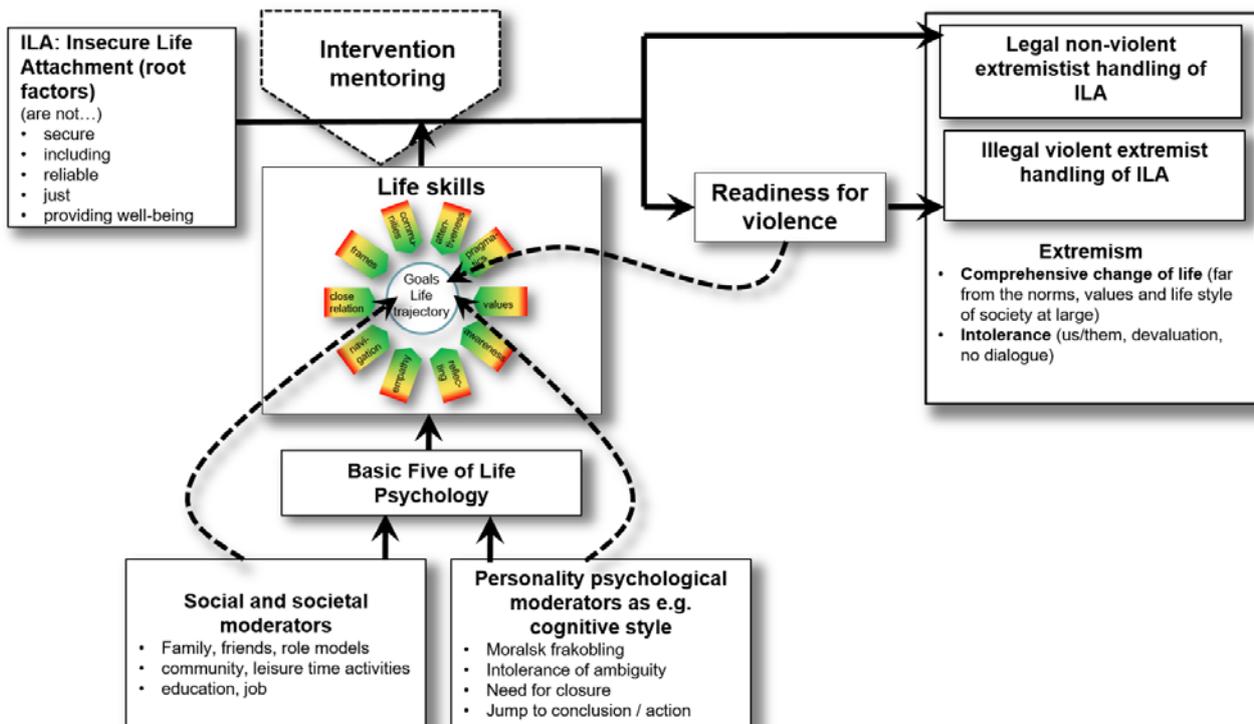


Figure 5: Here the model is presented as a theoretical research model as well as a mentoring model. Solid boxes and arrows represent the theoretical research model. Dotted lines and boxes represent the intervention element (i.e., how the

mentor may thematize the different risk factors). As will appear from the model, it may serve as research model with regard to how relatively complex relations between insecure life attachment and violent extremism and radicalization can be examined empirically.

As mentioned, this model may also serve as an overall methodology for mentoring. The model shows that mentoring is first and foremost concerned with empowerment and general education related to the mentee's way of using his/her general human life skills in order to obtain a good enough grip on the life he or she is challenged by. In this context, a good enough grip on life means a grip that is not illegal or based on violent extremism. Whether a good enough grip on life also means that it must be non-extremist as such, is another matter, which is more concerned with citizenship in general. As defined here, extremism (e.g., manifestation of intolerance, opting out dialogue, etc.) clearly has very little to do with citizenship. But, to the extent that such a position does not lead to crime, violence or terrorism, this will - in terms of the model being considered here - not cause any anti-radicalization interventions, but should rather be subject to general discussion and policy regarding pedagogics and education in relation to way of life, culture and society.

On the face of it, mentoring is about the life tasks, which the mentee perceives as important and about empowerment of the corresponding life skills, so that the mentee comprehends and is capable of managing these challenges in a meaningful way. As the key element of the model, the Wheel Of Skills will provide a systematic way of covering all the mentee's challenges in order to discover the skills, which immediately can and should be empowered in order to develop the mentees' grip on life. The BFL element enables the mentor and the mentee to systematically investigate the directedness of each skill so that the mentee may become motivated for developing and creating skills that may contribute to a good enough grip on life tasks in particular and on life in general.

All things considered, any intervention based on the proposed model is carried out at two levels: an immediate solution-focused level and a deeper, underlying cognitive level. At the immediate solution-focused level, the mentor and the mentee work together to manage the specific challenges the mentee is faced with (be they small everyday tasks or major choices of life). The solution consists in transforming the challenge into goals as well as in identifying and empowering the life skills involved in managing the challenges in a legal and non-violent way. However, this specific kind of work does indeed also establish a training ground or a learning process, which contribute to a basic (metacognitive) development and formation of general and generic human life skills. This empowerment can then also be used in relation to other areas of the mentee's life and hence help to a general strengthening of the mentee's grip on own and common life.

In other words, the strength of the model is that the mentor and other people *not having the specialized professional training and skills may actually contribute to significant changes in the mentee's grip on life* by making use of the model's systematics and its workflow in relation to the ordinary everyday life as well as the major challenges of life. This will be elaborated in more detail in the next section.

3. Mentoring guided by LGT

Goal setting as point of departure

The theoretical model can be transformed into a Life Psychological Goal Setting Tool, LGT. This tool can be used as: (1) *Assessment tool* in order to investigate the mentee's grip on life. (2) *Intervention tool* in order to empower the mentee's grip on life and to challenge any

extremism by showing how development and formation of the general life skills may result in robustness and resilience in relation to insecure life attachment. (3) *Supervision tool* by means of which the mentor supervisor and the mentor supervisand can work systematically with the objectives of the specific mentor process of the mentee.

As will appear from Figure 6, LGT points to a systematized workflow in the mentoring process. First, a life challenge must be transformed into an understandable, manageable, and meaningful goal for the mentee. For example, to transform the challenge "My family has no clue as to how I feel about it" into the goal "I will join my family for dinner every night so that we may talk about things". Here, LGT and the underlying life-psychological theory are completely in line with the goal-setting theory as developed by, for example, Locke & Latham (2013): To have a good enough grip on one's life is basically about being able to set goals, about creating, maintaining or developing or changing something in own and common life. Having goals is simply about well-being in life (Dienes et al. 1999, Dienes 2000 Seligman 2002, Kahneman & Krueger, 2006, Baily et al. 2007). Well-being in connection with setting goals presupposes being *committed* to the goal, having *self-efficacy* with regard to achieving a goal and experiencing that one is actually *getting closer* to the goal (Locke & Latham 2013) – which is exactly what can be investigated by the BFL tool.

Furthermore, good goals are s.m.a.r.t., an acronym and method originally proposed by Doran (1981). Each letter stands for a goal-boosting principle. Over time, there have been many suggestions as to what the five principles more precisely stand for in terms of the model under consideration here: Goals should be **S**pecific (i.e., comprehensive, meaningful, manageable), **M**easurable (i.e., one should be able to track progress toward the goal), **A**ttuned (goals should be sufficiently

challenging and engaging, but not too demanding and frustrating), **R**ealistic (i.e., knowing what to do and what is required to reach one's goal), **T**imed (i.e., setting a challenging but not unrealistic deadline).

A further consideration concerning the mentee's goal of getting a grip on part of his/her own life is that no matter how problematic the mentee (or the mentor) finds the current situation, there will *always* be something about the mentee's grip that, in spite of everything, will work well enough: ("You describe your relationship with X as troublesome, but you also told us that you actually had a cozy chat last Tuesday"). According to methods inspired by Signs of Safety (Turnell & Edwards 1999), it is important that the mentor works in a *resource-oriented* way to find out what is actually working well enough in the general life of the mentee or to find the goals to be achieved, and then point this out to the mentee. In other words, it is important for mentor and mentee not to be lost in mere deficit-oriented negativity. Clearly it is equally important not to be naive. First of all, mentee and mentor meet for a reason: Something is definitely not as it should be. Secondly, and this applies to all of us no matter how good our grip on life may be, there will always be something to improve. There is always something that may be subject to small- or large-scale changes. It will therefore be important to have a look at each objective in order to find out what is *working well*, what *could be better*, and how *should one improve*. In terms of LGT the similar questions are: *How can this skill help you to reach your goal? – How does this skill already work well for you? - What about this skill could you improve?*

Central to the model is, of course, the notion of life skills. As will appear from the above presentation, any goal will ultimately be a specific expression of one of the general human life tasks, and, strictly speaking, all life tasks are one way or another represented in any

specific goal. For a young person, getting, for example, an education would mean:

1. *Relations*: getting acquainted with nice fellow students
2. *Framework*: structuring everyday life
3. *Community*: participating in class activities or joining an interest group at school
4. *Attentiveness*: focusing on what takes place in class
5. *Planning*: planning the studies and allowing time for the various study-related tasks
6. *Norms and values*: relating to the norms and values in class and at school
7. *Attentiveness*: Perceiving the tone and feelings involved in class discussions
8. *Reflection*: checking out how one feels about educational goals
9. *Empathy*: sensing what the fellow students think, feel and want
10. *Navigation*: relating to rules and demands of the education

By means of the Wheel Of Skills, the mentor and mentee can focus on which specific aspect of the goal is most important for the mentee right now, and therefore also which life skills should be empowered in order to achieve this important aspect of the goal. Two young people may both have the above goals of getting an education. However, for one of these young people the goal is only successfully achieved if he/she happened to get some nice fellow students. In this case, it is the relation task and the relation skills which highlight specific personal meaning of the goal. What currently matters most to the other young

person may, however, be a good daily rhythm and structure, which is crucial in order to find time and space for an education. Here the framework task and the framework skill is the focus of the goal. As mentioned, all life tasks are, in principle, always one way or another part of any goal and should therefore, in principle, always put all the general human life skills into play to fully realizing the goal. In practice, one would probably first of all focus on one to three prominent and relevant life skills.

Last, but certainly not least, it is important to construct the mentee's next concrete step toward his or her goal. This is a parallel to the often-used homework clients or mentees should perform between sessions to improve their skills. The mentee will often report that he or she failed to perform their homework, as it was too abstract and/or not performable and/or not motivating. Therefore it is important that the next step is constructed as many details as possible (s.m.a.r.t. could be used here as well): What to do? Who should be involved, exactly when should it be done? This first step may be boosted by means of the Basic Five of Life Psychology (BFL) precisely to secure the best motivating factor and desired direction (BFL may, for that matter, also be used in order to boost the very initial goal). As previously mentioned, the five basic questions in Figure 3 can be elaborated to include some auxiliary questions (pro, contra, alternative).

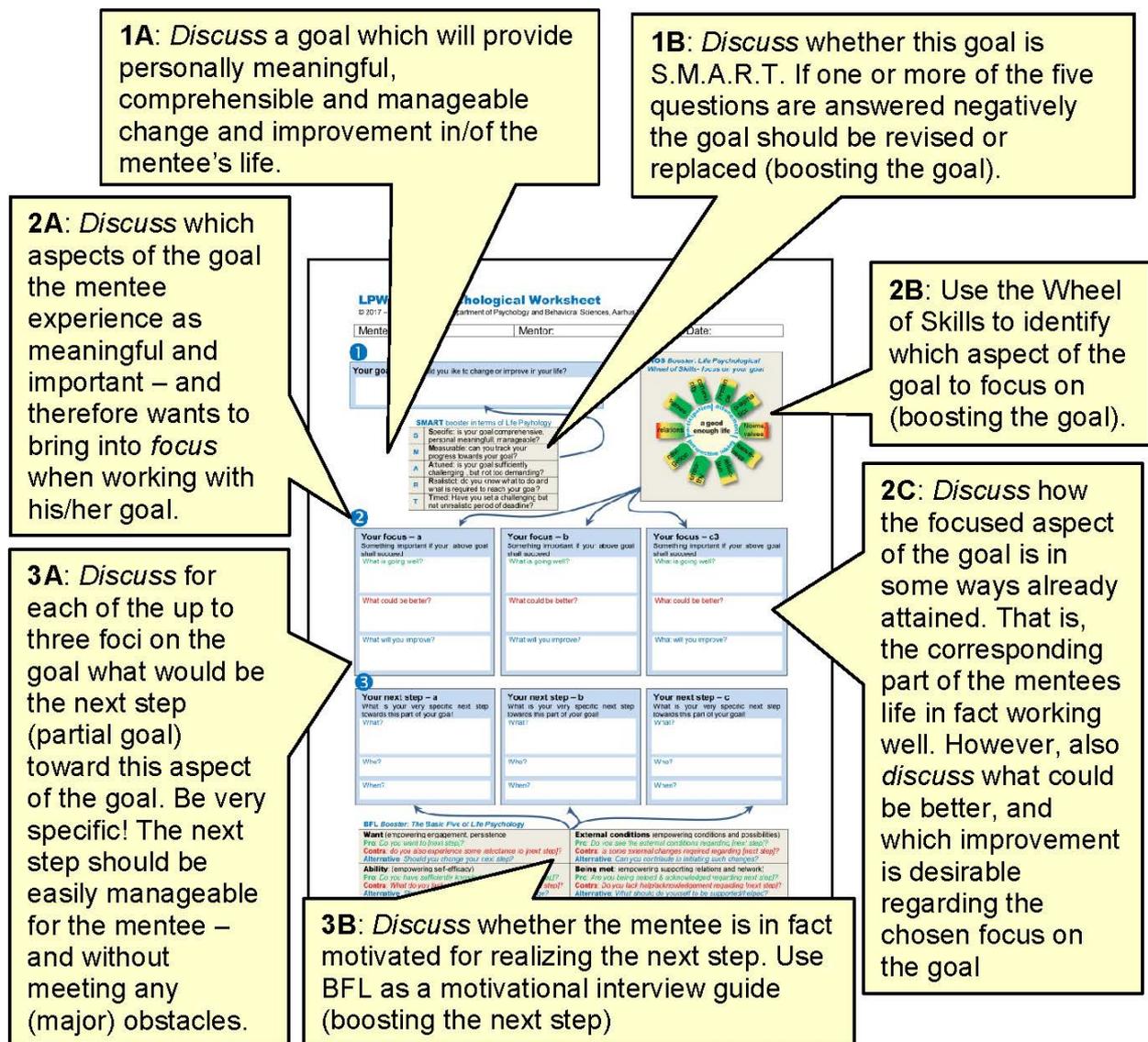


Figure 6: Explanation of the mentoring workflow in the LGT tool (see figure 8 for a larger, easy-to-read layout of the LGT form).

4. Case demonstration of LGT-based mentoring in de-radicalization

The Wheel of Skills as assessment tool and LTG as concrete working plan

In conclusion a demonstration of how the tools can be applied in relation to a case.

“A” is a young man who was reported to the authorities by the staff at the youth education he was attending. He was reported because of his vehement/drastring statements about Denmark and the Western world and his defence of Jihad and the Caliphate at school, on Twitter as well as on Facebook. During heated discussions at school, he has several times verbally abused fellow students and once

he even pushed one of them violently because he felt that this person subjected his religion to severe criticism. He meanwhile dropped out (this is the second time he has dropped out of a youth education). The authorities have decided to assign a mentor to A. He has accepted their decision.

A lives with his parents and two siblings, a younger brother and a younger sister, in a large modern apartment. A shares a large room with his brother. Both parents have permanent, paid jobs. They are both extremely busy at work and spend little time at home. A seldom talks with his father or mother on a one-to-one basis.

His father may at times be very reserved, and at other times very short-tempered and hitting out at A. A finds it difficult to decode both his father and his mother. His mother is not much of a speaker, and yet she sighs, gives him glances, etc., without A really knowing what it is all about. He finds it difficult to put such things in words.

When A is at home, he cannot be bothered by all of this and mostly keeps to himself in his room where he plays advanced computer games which require much concentration and overview. Until now he has been member of a team players, and they are doing quite well in national and international competitions. He schedules their training. Lately he has, however, lost interest in the game.

A's parents have never taken much interest in A's school attendance. They do not know whether he likes school or what he thinks about the subjects; they do not really relate to it. A has no clear and fixed boundaries for his daily life. He often spends a lot of time outside home, comes home late at night, even if his parents scold him for doing so. Then they will all be shouting at each other in the hallway, until A goes to his room and slams the door behind him. Then his brother will wake up and be mad, and sometimes A will box his brother on the ear.

He very much appreciates the rare occasions when all members of the family sit together in the living room or are having a BBQ get-together in the park with other family members in the evening. He enjoys the quiet and cozy socializing. In his own words, this is when his body feels calm and completely relaxed. Even though he is at times very tired of his brother, he will often talk to him about school. His younger brother is frequently being bullied by some other boys and A can easily imagine what it is like and tries to help him.

In A's neighborhood, some of the residents are involved in major projects: a large project on establishing shared kitchen gardens and a project on beautification of the common areas so that it will be nicer to spend time there: cutting shrubs and trees, setting up tables and benches as well as permanent barbecue pits, etc. He often drops by to ask interested questions but does not take part in the projects.

His parents do not practice religion on an everyday basis, yet they consider themselves Muslims. Within the past six months, A has become increasingly focused on religious answers to the meaning of life, how to live a decent life and how society should be organized. He has started to make statements such as 'democracy is a blasphemous attempt to set aside God's plans with the human society on Earth' (the Caliphate), and 'democracy has been invented by non-believers who glorify people who know best and disregard the path laid down by God. He has started to loudly criticize his family and neighbors for not being true Muslims, and to criticize fellow students for giving parties and playing music. He also criticizes girls for being dressed as whores – particularly his sister whom he constantly scolds.

Lately A has started to hang out a lot with other young people, who share his interest in religion as well as his indignation and anger about what

it is like to be a young Muslim in Denmark. They do a lot of things together, and he says that they understand him. They are the ones he usually hangs out with late at night. Part of the time they spend together is used for intense studies of the Quran under supervision in the Mosque.

He listens to certain religious leaders on the internet, their manifestos regarding the Caliphate and the duty for militant Jihad (?). In particular, A is very enthusiastic about clear and straightforward statements from religious leaders. He is very pleased to finally have found someone who clearly and plainly state the truth about human life and way of life. At the same time he despises school teachers who ramble on and never come up with clear attitudes and straight answers. He would quickly lose his patience during discussions in school and wanted to go straight to the heart of the matter: "It's not that complicated, let's move on" - or "You think too much, you just need to realize the answer". He says that when discussing in class, he would shut his mind completely to an understanding of why other people would say the things they said. They do not think as people should think, they do not deserve to be taken seriously, he says. The teaching staff says that he would very easily get angry and seem threatening.

He also thinks that most of the residents in his neighborhood "are all talk". The old men call out, but never do anything. Nothing ever comes out of it. He has become preoccupied with online ISIS videos. He likes to quote them and says that they show videos of young people from all over the world who actually take things seriously. As a matter of fact they act, they have a fantastic team spirit, a brotherhood, and they will sacrifice themselves for a worthy and important case.

According to A, the teachers at school are always stressed and in a bad mood. When they talk to him and other non-ethnic Danes, they will scold, be critical, belittle them and seem

resigned. In retrospect, his experience of primary and lower secondary school is that he and "his kind" were always in one way or another excluded by the teachers. They were never elected for anything, never asked, etc. When he has attempted to get a youth education, he has dropped out again shortly after, one of the reasons being that he missed some nice fellow students.

In class he usually got bored when the specialized subject matters were discussed (?). He never got around to having an overview of any of the subjects and the related curriculum. He almost never did his homework and mostly he just surfed the internet or played games on his smart phone. When he still attended the various study programs, he received several reprimands concerning absence, inappropriate behavior, and inactivity in class. At first, he did not react to these warnings, but recently he has come to see them as expressions of the fact that the Danish system - school as well as society - is fundamentally a racist, discriminating system being extremely guilty of double standards, actually an immoral system. He thinks that the school system functions poorly. He accepts that rules, systems and compliance with requirements are necessary in society as well as in school. In his opinion, the teachers and the system just not live up to their own policy and rules.

For a short period of time he was member of an interest group at one of the schools he attended. This interest group was organized to establish directions for decent social conventions at school and on the social media. He was soon elected chairman, and he learned that organizing meetings and events was an exciting task. After a short while the students felt that the participating teachers wanted to be too much in control of things, and then the group broke up. Currently he feels that it is not worthwhile to attempt anything within the framework of the system. After all it is rotten to the core, and no one can be bothered to listen anyway.

A thinks a lot about his future. He feels stressed by not knowing which direction his life will take. The future seems very uncertain and desperate. He knows that many people from a similar background have a solid education but who have not succeed in getting a job in spite of a large number of job applications; they are not even invited to a job interview. A thinks that no matter what you do to get a good life, the politicians will probably spoil it all by restrictions against and cutbacks directed at people like him. When asked directly, he says that he has almost never felt welcome and accepted as a Dane. He and some of his new friends talk a lot about how they are afraid that something may happen to them and what they can do for themselves and their families in view of the smear campaigns and the xenophobia they experience in society. He is worried, frustrated, and furious.

He would very much like to get an education, to earn his own money and to have a self-supporting family of his own. He would like to

be more in control of own school attendance, and together with his mentor he has actually started to plan a weekly schedule and to change his circadian rhythm.

Mentoring based on LGT

Figure 6 shows how the Wheel of Skills (WOS) is used for a systematic assessment of the quality of this young man's grip on life. It is particularly worth noticing how each skill is examined both as a possible risk factor (what could be better) and at the same time always also as a possible protection factor (what works well). Furthermore, the Basic Five of Life Psychology is formed by a cognitive style of intolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity, jumping to conclusion and monomaniacal occupation with religion, as well as a worrying readiness for violence and *doing* something, whatever it takes.

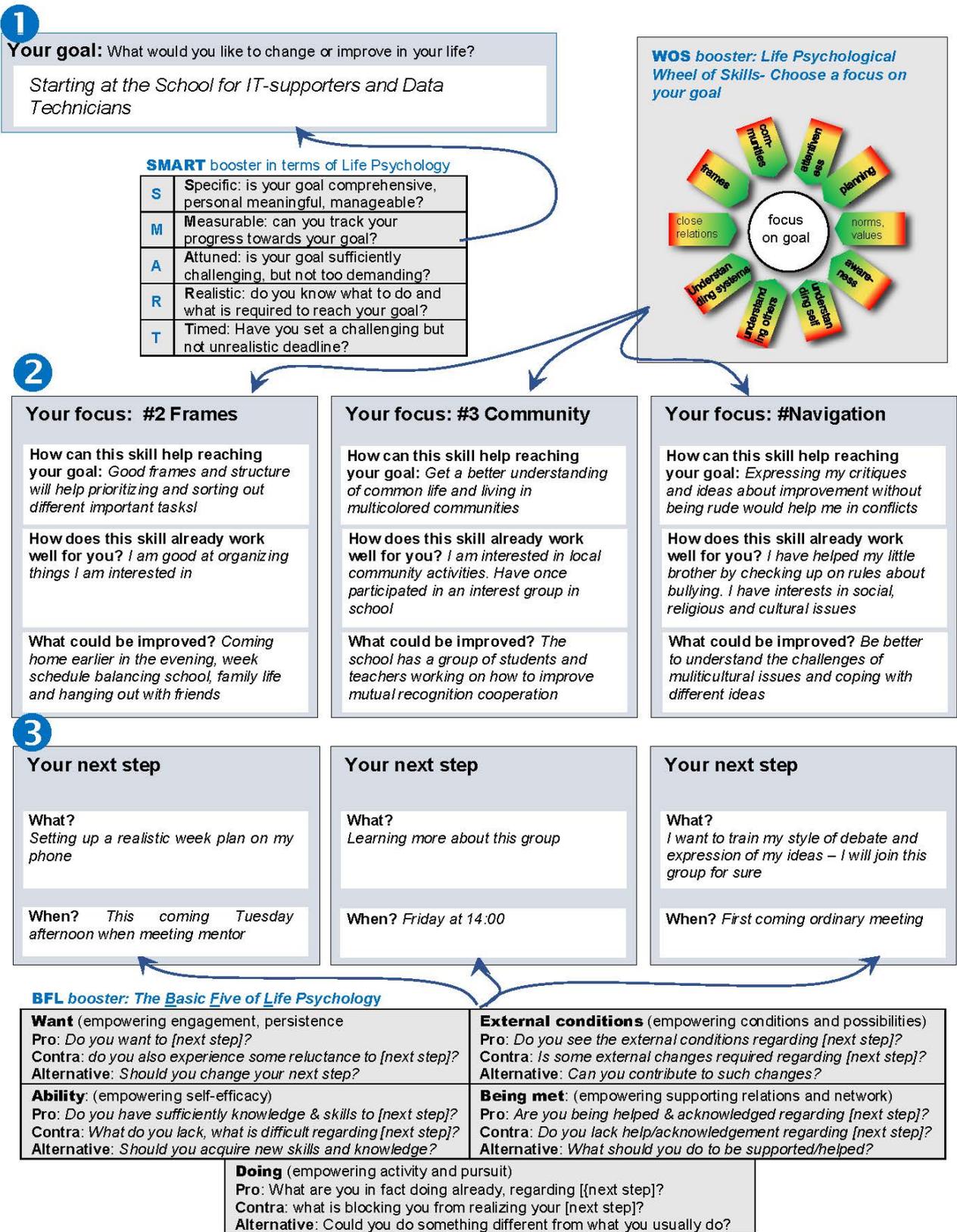


Figure 8. This figure shows an example of which points a mentee and his mentor have chosen to focus on and work with in a solution-oriented manner in the near future, based on a general assessment produced by the WOS as assessment tool.

Concluding remarks

Good mentoring is not only based on good relations and Socratic questioning techniques, but also on a substantial knowledge of the case and on an explicit project, namely to counteract illegal and violent extremism. This article argues that efficient mentoring which makes a difference to the mentee - and ultimately to all of us - is not to be based on specific factors, challenges, and deficits, which exclusively relate to extremists. On the contrary, the point of departure is generally human: That which is of ultimate concern to all of us, i.e., a good enough grip on life and a secure life attachment.

The grip, which we all have on our own and common life can lead us along an infinite diversity of individual life trajectories, depending on basic personality traits, cultural history and life history. In this article, extremism is understood as a life trajectory characterized by an attempt to (re-)construct a life that is perceived as (or actually is) threatened, and a life attachment that is perceived as (or actually is) insecure. However, most importantly, a (re-)construction based on use of the generally human life skills, which brutally and uncompromisingly override the interests of the Community, dehumanizes people having other hopes and dreams for life and a (re-)constructing life project, which accept the illegal and violent means.

The mentor's task is to empower, educate and re-direct the general human life skills of the mentee, and thus the mentee may comprehend and manage the basic life tasks and the root factors of insecure life attachment in legal and non-violent ways. Preferably, in a way that will give a citizenship-creating and including voice to the mentee's potential indignation and criticism of current life conditions.

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