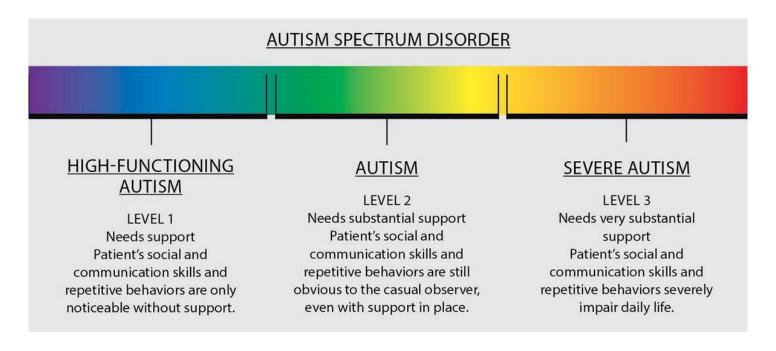


How Different Features of Autism Spectrum Disorder can Contextualise Vulnerability and Resilience to Terrorism Related Behaviours

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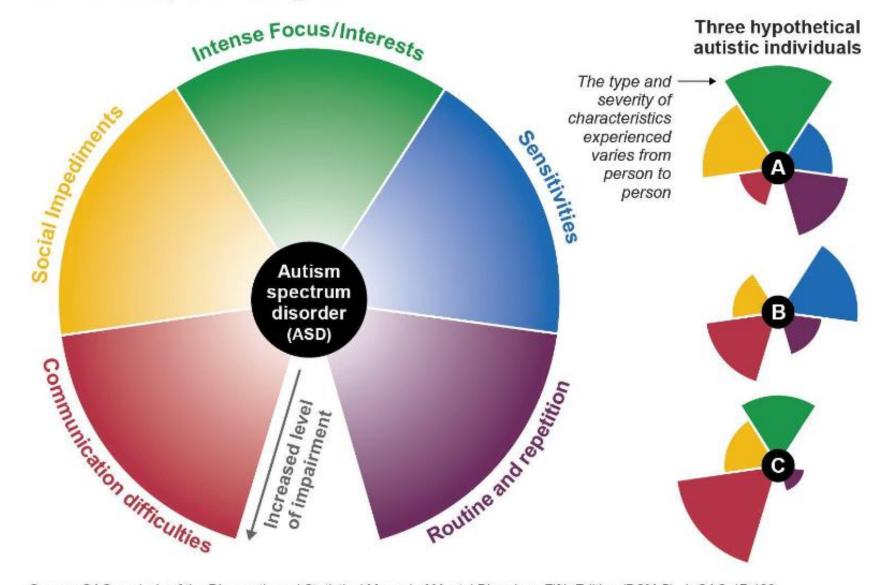


Autism

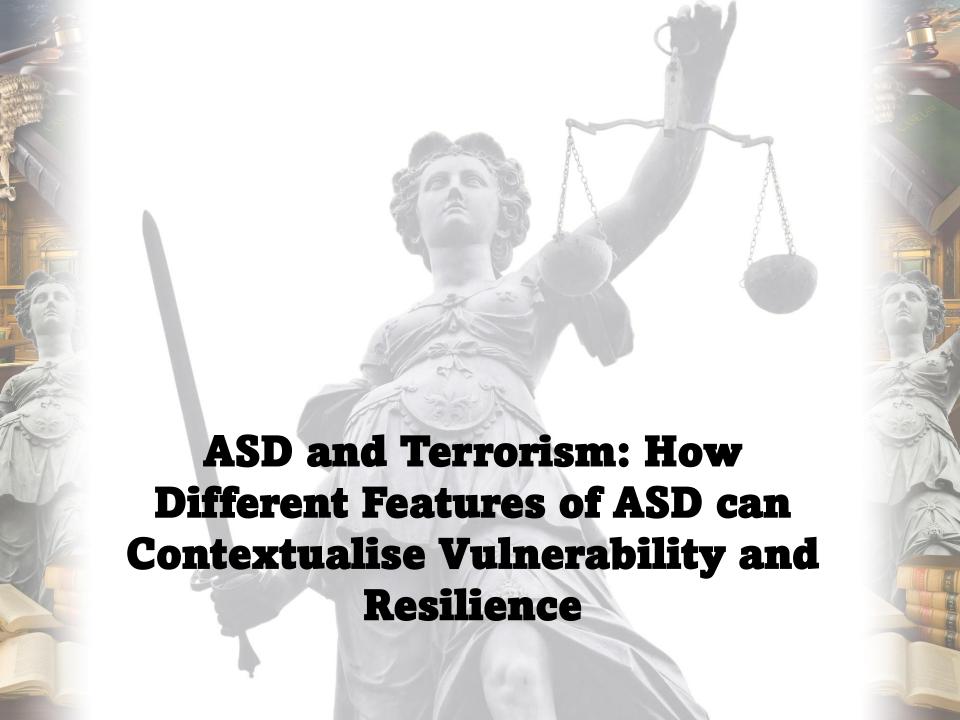


It is important to highlight that to think of someone with ASD as being on a spectrum (ranging from severely impaired to mildly impaired) is inaccurate. Rather, it is more appropriate and accurate to consider each person with ASD separately and their particular profile of strengths and weaknesses – in other words, that individual's particular variation in ASD characteristics or features/traits.

GAO grouped the characteristics associated with autism into five broad categories, with some overlap between categories.



Source: GAO analysis of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5). | GAO-17-109





Southport attacker Axel Rudakubana

- On the 29th of July 2024, a 17 year old male entered a Taylor Swift themed dance class in the British city of Southport armed with a knife. He then proceeded the stab the young girls in attendance, managing to kill 3 and injuring many others before being stopped.
- The attacker, Axel Rudakubana, was recently sentenced to 52 years in prison and during his arrest he stated that he was proud of his actions and glad the girls are dead.







ASD and Terrorism: How Different Features of ASD can Contextualise Vulnerability and Resilience

- There is no evidence supporting the existence of an association between ASD and terrorism in the general population (Faccini & Allely, 2017; Al-Attar, 2020). However, it is crucial that there is "an understanding of the individual's autistic functioning and how it may contextualise factors that push them towards terrorism and aspects of terrorism that may pull them in, in order to manage and reduce risk" when terrorist acts are planned or executed by an individual with ASD (Al-Attar, 2020, pp. 926).
- There has been some research exploring how ASD can 'contextualise vulnerability and risk' (Faccini & Allely, 1917; Al-Attar, 2016a, 2016b, 2018b, 2018c, 2019; Al-Attar, 2020, pp. 926).
- Dr Zainab Al-Attar (2020) detailed seven facets of ASD that "may have different functional links with push and pull factors to terrorism" (pp. 928).



Dr Zainab Al-Attar (2020) outlined and examined seven facets of ASD that may have different functional links with push and pull factors to terrorism.

- Facet 1: Circumscribed interests
- Facet 2: Rich vivid fantasy & impaired social imagination
- Facet 3: Need for order, rules, rituals, routine and predictability
- Facet 4: Obsessionality, repetition and collecting
- Facet 5: Social interaction and communication difficulties
- Facet 6: Cognitive styles
- Facet 7: Sensory processing



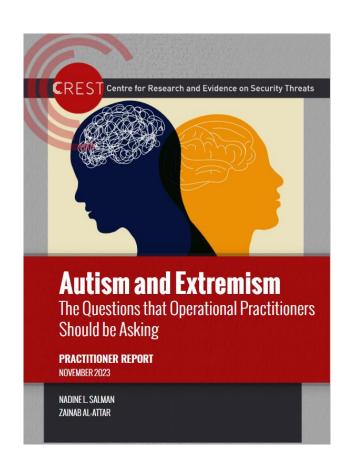
Facet 1: Circumscribed interests

- One of the core features of ASD is an intense, narrow, all absorbing interest that may become pre-occupying and frequently researched in extensive detail by the individual.
- Circumscribed interests may offer a sense of purpose, social identity and topic of conversation, and the autistic individual often finds that they function at their optimal levels of cognitive, motivational, and social functioning and present with a high level of expertise when engaging and conversing in the topic of their interest.
- When researching their all-consuming and obsessional interest, they may become completely immersed and absorbed in their details and the immediate rewards becoming less focused on the links in the cause-andeffect of their behaviour (Al-Attar, 2019).





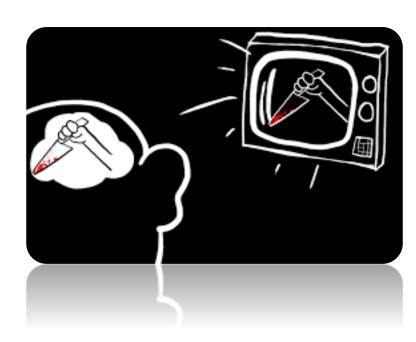
- What role do the individual's interests play in their pathway to extremism engagement?
- Where and with whom does the individual engage with risk-related interests (online and offline)?
- What needs does engaging in these interests address? Does it provide positive feelings such as excitement, mastery, connectedness with others, or a deep sense of identity and purpose? Does it reduce negative feelings such as anxiety, depression, agitation, and stress?
- Do other factors (e.g., stressors) exacerbate the need to use risky interests to self-soothe? Do interests link to pre-occupations with life difficulties and stressors?





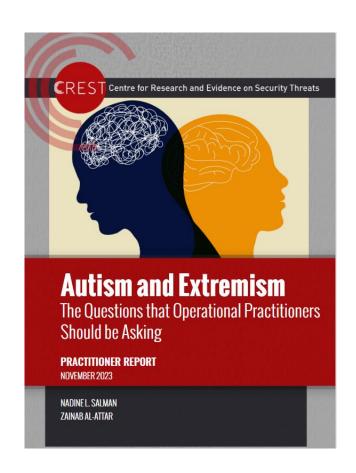
Facet 2: Rich vivid fantasy and impaired social imagination

- Restricted interests and pre-occupations may be exhibited through vivid fantasy which is usually visual (Al-Attar, 2020).
- The contents of their fantasy life are usually based, very directly, on what they have come across both offline and online as opposed to being based on social imagination or abstract ideas (Al-Attar, 2019).
- Fine details of the fantasy may be more captivating than any wider emotional meaning or social context of the fantasy and when these are shared online or offline by the individual and affirmed by others, fantasy can become socially/externally reinforced also.
- In the fantasies there may be certain themes which provide 'certain functions' (e.g., revenge or violent fantasies which alleviate feelings of anger) or 'general functions' (e.g., being intellectually stimulating or exciting) (Al-Attar, 2020).





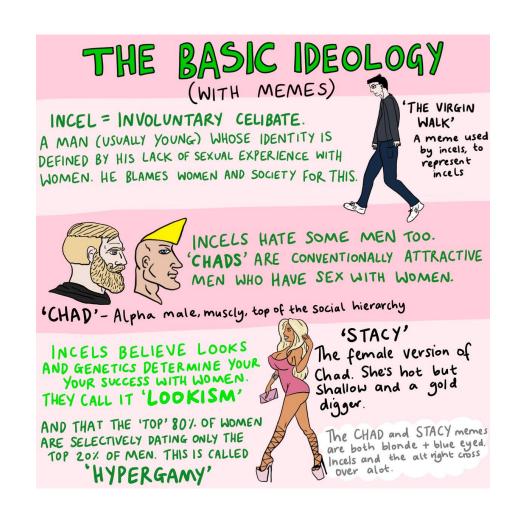
- What risk-related fantasies does the individual experience?
- Where does the inspiration for riskrelated fantasies originate? Are these fantasies adapted from extreme content?
- What are the triggers for risk-related fantasies and what feelings do fantasies generate?
- What might be stopping the individual from acting out risk-related fantasies?
- What might be compelling the individual to act out risk-related fantasies?





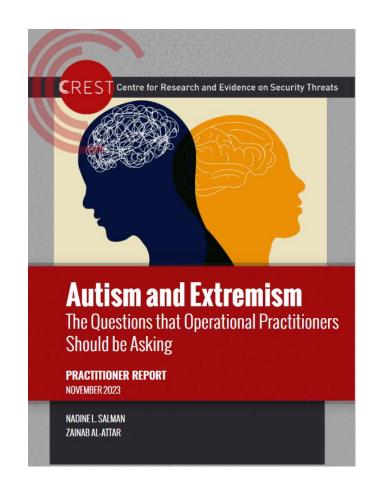
Facet 3: Need for order, rules, rituals, routine and predictability

- The social world can be chaotic and unpredictable for individuals with ASD.
- They may read and carry out extensive amounts of research to try and made sense of an otherwise chaotic world. May come across, often unintentionally, "explanations" and "solutions" which are extremist. Most extremist ideologies and terrorist groups claim to offer explanations for moral chaos, social injustice as well as solutions for this which are both concrete and literal (Al-Attar, 2018b, 2020).
- Extremist groups often brand themselves as organised, systematic and orderly. Some individuals with ASD find the world easier to understand the world when it is explained to them in categories, facts and systems (bypassing the complex social and emotional aspects of people's lives) (Al-Attar, 2019).





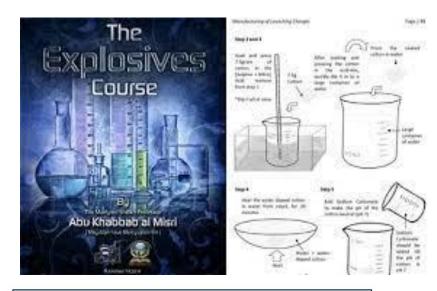
- Does the risk-related interest, fantasy, ideology, or group meet a need to restore order, punish rulebreaking, or provide a sense of predictability?
- Does a disruption to routines, order, or rulebreaking feed into a threat or grievance narrative for the individual.

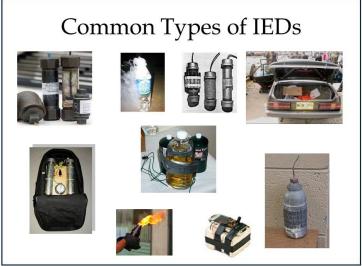




Facet 4: Obsessionality, repetition and collecting

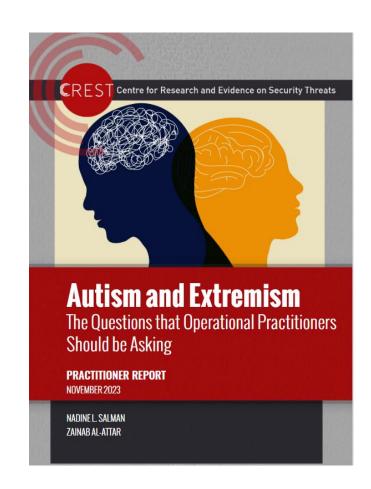
- It is common for autistic individuals to pursue their interest or pre-occupation in a repetitive manner (and pedantically) and it becomes all-encompassing as they engage in their pre-occupation at the expense of other things such as social relationships (Klin et al., 2007).
- With regards to terroristic (or extremist)
 behaviour, the individual may engage in
 the accumulation of substantial amounts
 of information or data associated with
 terrorism, watch propaganda videos
 repeatedly or engage in making items
 relating to terrorism.
- Pre-occupational interests may be inaccurately misinterpreted as being strong indication of an intense commitment to terrorism.







- What purpose does any collecting behaviour serve for the individual (e.g., what feelings does it generate)? Does the collecting behaviour feel compulsive?
- Do collecting behaviours increase risk of harm or offending? Consider whether the items/content collected are directly linked to offending (e.g., preparation of terrorist acts, offensive weapons).
- Does the individual appear to be fixated on a grievance, injustice, or specific individuals or groups?



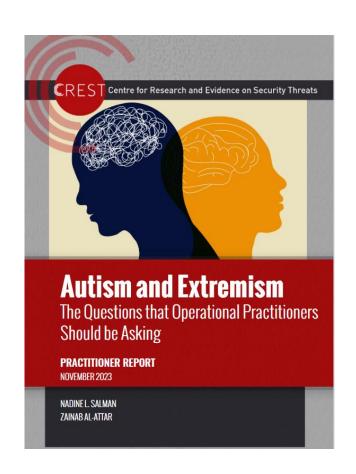


Facet 5: Social interaction and communication difficulties

- Autistic individuals can find navigating the social world challenging, stressful, anxiety-provoking and exhausting which can lead many to withdraw from the complex social world becoming socially isolated and anxious as a result. The online environment is a predictable and safe environment.
- Like-minded individuals can also communicate and share their interests and opinions on the online environment. For some with ASD, this may be the first time they have ever experienced a sense of connection or belonging to another person or group (Al-Attar, 2020).
- If the autistic individual accesses extremist websites, they may read what is on these extremist websites and take them literally & at face value (Al-Attar, 2019, pp. 12).
- They may talk about their ideology in very graphic, matter of fact terms, with a flat expression and tone of voice and volunteer a substantial amount of detail. Such a presentation may be mistaken by the interviewer as evidence of boasting about terrorist capabilities and impact or trying to cause fear or to shock (Al-Attar, 2018b).



- Have social interaction and communication difficulties contributed to experiences of stress, threat, grievance, and injustice that may relate (directly or indirectly) to extremism pathways?
- Does extremism engagement (online or offline) fulfil social needs?
- Does the individual appear to have additional vulnerabilities (e.g., to exploitation) related to a lack of social awareness?
- Do communication strengths linked to extremist interests afford social acceptance, status, or identity?





Facet 6: Cognitive styles

There are four features of neurocognitive functioning which Al-Attar has drawn attention to which may contribute to the push and pull factors (Al-Attar, 2020).

- (1) Theory-of-Mind
- (2) Central Coherence
- (3) Systemising
- (4) Attention-switching

"Push" factors may include distress, insecurity, and anxiety which are caused by perceived threats and injustice. "Pull" factors include "the appeal of extremist causes and groups in addressing such negative feelings and restoring order, safety, and justice" (Al-Attar, 2018b, pp. 326).



(1) Theory-of-Mind (ToM)

 The ability to understand how others think/feel when this differs from our own perspective is reliant on ToM. (Al-Attar, 2020). There can be medicolegal implications with impaired ToM that need to be considered by clinicians who are performing court assessments. There are also implications for risk assessment and rehabilitation post-conviction (Al-Attar, 2018b).

Caveat here

- "Mentalising" refers to the capacity to attribute mental states to other people.
- Autistic people are less efficient at mentalising, rather than that they have "no theory of mind."
- ToM a naive theory one can have about how the mind works (Quesque & Rossetti, 2020).



(2) Central Coherence

There is a tendency for individuals with ASD to 'overfocus' on fine detail or strong 'local coherence' which is coupled with the tendency to not see the bigger picture or weak 'central coherence'. Weak central coherence can impair an individual's ability to recognise and understand the links between events and also the links between one's own behaviour or actions and the consequences of these (Hill, 2004).

When applied to the situation or context of a terrorist offender, such impairments may result in the individual carrying out extensive research on single ideas or devices that may be entirely unrelated to an operational objective. However, they engage in this with no understanding or appreciation of the legal implications of what they are doing (Al-Attar, 2018b).

During the interview, some individuals with ASD may appear to be motivated by the broad objective in the narrative, even when they are not, because they have rote learned the narratives of a terrorist ideology or group. Interviewers need to recognise this and aim to identify the features or elements that the individual has focused on without assuming that all the elements of interest or focus for the individual with ASD are joined together indicating they are motivated by the broad objective in the narrative (Al-Attar, 2018b).

Individuals with ASD may give the interviewer a substantial amount of fine details. It is imperative that the interviewer does not simply view this as being evasiveness or a form of deflection. Nor should it be viewed as an attempt to impress or boast (Al-Attar, 2018b).



(3) Systemising

- In individuals with ASD there is a strong tendency towards systemising. Individuals who are high in systemising have a tendency to process and organise everything around as systems, facts and categories even social interactions/relationships. This particular neurocognitive functioning may elevate significantly the individual's "need for a logical world whereby people and events can be ordered into systems, categories, hierarchies, theories and facts" (Al-Attar, 2020, pp. 942). Ordering the world in such a way can help reduce how confusing and unpredictable the social world is (Al-Attar, 2020).
- For some individuals with ASD, when ideologies and terrorist groups represent society
 (and the problems with society) through categorical facts and systems (e.g., presenting
 racial groups in a hierarchy) it can be appealing and also easy for them to understand.
 Some individuals with ASD can find the real social world very chaotic and so this
 alternative view is easy for them to accept.
- Interviewers also need to consider whether the terrorists ideologies are providing the
 offender with a structure of the world that appeals to them or if it is the social and
 emotional dimensions of the terrorist causes and groups that is driving them (Al-Attar,
 2018b).

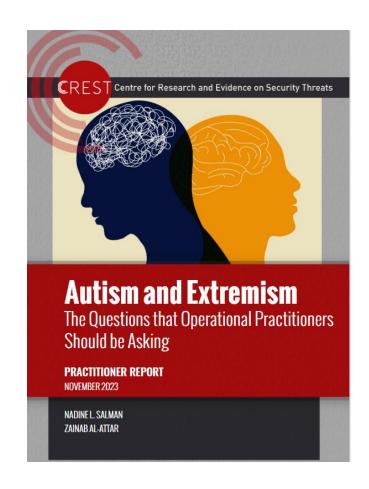


(4) Attention-Switching

- Individuals with ASD can exhibit an impaired attention switching ability which can have a detrimental impact on their mental flexibility and their ability to switch attention between different topics/ideas (Al-Attar, 2020).
- This type of neurocognitive functioning may impact the pathway to terrorist offending itself. For instance, when the offence related interests and ideas become fixated and perseverant. For example, setting out to make an explosive which subsequently leads to the research of a range of types of explosive.
- Al-Attar (2018b) recommends that interviewers should make the distinction between continuation of behaviour which is due to cognitive difficulty the individual has in attention-shifting versus continuation of behaviour which is due to a lengthy offenceplanning.
- The interviewer may need to identify which behaviours had specific operational objectives and which are fixated ASD interests due to cognitive rigidity and impaired attention switching (Al-Attar, 2018b).



- Have difficulties in education, work, and managing day-to-day demands contributed to distress and pushed towards a grievance narrative?
- Does the individual demonstrate an attention to detail in risky interests that could confer terrorist capability (e.g., bomb-making) or susceptibility to an ideology?
- Does the individual have an appreciation of the wider context and social and legal consequences of their extremist interests and actions?
- Does the individual struggle to understand how their actions may be perceived by, or may affect, others?





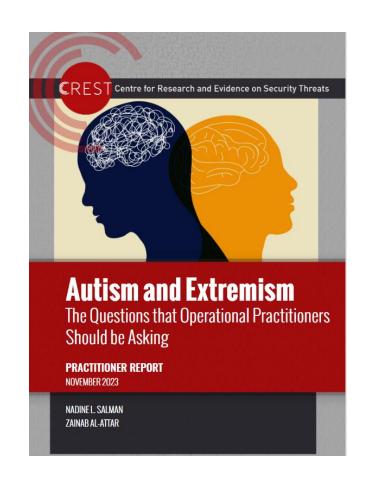
Facet 7: Sensory processing

• May be a significant sensory appeal (strong sensory pull) to terrorist materials to some autistic individuals (e.g., their colours, lights, smells, noises of chemicals and explosives). Terrorist imagery, magazines, diagrams, flags, murals, uniforms, weapons and paraphernalia, etc., can have a significant sensory appeal (visually - detail/colour) to the autistic individual (Al-Attar, 2020). Hypersensitivity may have played a contributory role in an indirect way to the offence pathway (Al-Attar, 2018b).





- Have sensory sensitivities (directly or indirectly) contributed towards stressors that push towards grievance narratives, or self-soothing through extremism engagement?
- Does extreme content and behaviour provide a sensory reward for the individual?



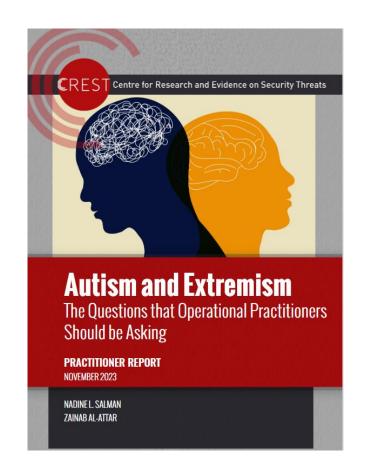


ADHD and Other Neurodevelopmental Disorders/Conditions

Individuals with autism and ADHD or other forms of neurodivergence may experience additional difficulties that may exacerbate some of the above challenges. Difficulties in organisation, planning, and prioritisation may exacerbate professional and academic challenges that may contribute to grievances. Impulsivity associated with ADHD may be linked to impulsive risk-taking behaviour and stimulation seeking through extremism. The presence of ADHD may also intensify sensory seeking behaviours, and increase the sensory pull of extreme content, including taboo topics linked to different forms of extremism and harmful behaviour.



- Does impulsive, reckless, or risktaking behaviour play a role in behaviours of concern (e.g., accessing extreme content, sharing extreme views, violence)?
- What rewards (e.g., sensory, novelty, interest) does extremism engagement provide for the individual?
- Does the individual switch between or seek several different risky interests, ideologies, or groups?



Autism Spectrum Disorder, Extremism, and the Role of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatric Clinicians

Neelkamal Soares, MD,* Clare S. Allely, PhD,† Frank Straub, PhD,‡ Melanie Penner, MD§

ABSTRACT: Extremism is a global phenomenon, with an increasing domestic and international presence. Extremists recruit persons to their causes through online forums that spread hate-filled narratives and promote violence. Individuals with autism spectrum disorder may be vulnerable to recruitment through these online forums, and clinicians who work with autistic adolescents, young adults, and their families should familiarize themselves with the risk and identify strategies based on a multidisciplinary approach in the early identification, holistic prevention, and care-based intervention strategies of at-risk adolescents. This special article, representing an international collaboration between developmental-behavioral pediatrics, law enforcement, and psychology, hopes to shed light on the issue for clinicians.

(J Dev Behav Pediatr 00:1–9, 2022) Index terms: developmental-behavioral pediatrics, psychology, autism spectrum disorder, extremism, anticipatory guidance, law enforcement.

here is no universal definition of "extremism," which is sometimes used interchangeably with "terrorism." According to the United Nations General Assembly, "extremism is thought to include a wider category of manifestations that do not reach the level of terrorist acts." Although counterextremism efforts previously focused on foreign religious or politically motivated groups, there is a growing awareness that domestic extremists motivated by a range of ideologies (or no ideology at all) pose an online threat.² As the online extremist presence and recruitment continues to grow, so should research to determine the risk it poses for vulnerable populations. In this article, we consider extremism as a "continuum" of potential behaviors from (1) viewing hate, polarizing, violent content online or in other mediums, to (2) adopting/personalizing the messaging in writing, clothing, or associations, to (3) taking

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental life span disorder highlighted by challenges in social and communication functioning, restricted interests, and/or repetitive behaviors.3 Although many professional organizations and publications prefer to use "person-first" language such as individual with ASD, several in the community and their advocates prefer "identity-first" language, such as autistic person. 4 To respect both preferences, we use the terms interchangeably in this article. Currently, there are exceedingly few studies regarding ASD and extremism to guide developmental-behavioral pediatric clinicians regarding the risk to their clients/patients with ASD. This special article will focus specifically on ASD; however, the risk-reduction approach articulated for ASD here might be used for individuals with intellectual disability (ID) and other neurodevelopmental disabilities as well.

Autism spectrum disorder, extremism and risk assessment

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Abstract

Background: To date, there is no evidence supporting the existence of an association between Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and extremism in the general population. However, there is increasing recognition that several features of ASD may provide the context of vulnerability to engage in extremist behaviour.

Aims: This paper sets out the case for a dedicated clinical approach to better integrate clinical risk appraisal processes with an assessment of ASD individuals' vulnerabilities within

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Rare instances of individuals with autism supporting or engaging in terrorism

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Abstract

Purpose – The prevalence of individuals with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) being associated with terroristic threats, lone wolf terrorism or affiliating with terroristic groups is rare. This paper aims to discuss this issue.

Design/methodology/approach – However, several cases are presented, where individuals with autism are involved in making a naïve, empty terroristic threat or uttering serious serial terroristic threats. Other cases are also presented of individuals being at risk for an abduction or being used by a terrorist group, and finally committing an act of domestic lone wolf terrorism.

Findings – Essential to the analysis was establishing a functional connection between autism-based deficits and the terroristic threats, terrorism, and when to not criminalize naive, empty terroristic threats or acts.

Originality/value – Currently, tools available to law enforcement and prosecutors exploit the vulnerabilities and liabilities which arise as a result of group interactions, a "preventive" approach to terrorism that is not applicable to the solitary, "lone wolf" terrorist. There has been relatively little research (including case studies) examining individuals with ASD who engage in terrorism. For instance, when dealing with an individual with ASD who is charged with terrorism, it is crucial to consider how the diagnosis of autism may have presented as a contextual vulnerability, and to make sure that justice, rehabilitation and management, are informed by an understanding of the person's diagnosis of ASD.

Keywords Asperger's syndrome, Autism spectrum disorder, Terrorism, Domestic Ione wolf terrorism, Lone wolf terrorism, Path to intended and terroristic violence

Paper type Case study



FARAS

- Should be used by as an adjunct to risk assessments.
- Reference: Al-Attar, Z. (2018).

Framework for the Assessment of Risk & Protection in Offenders on the Autistic Spectrum

A Guide for Risk Assessors Working with Offenders on the Autistic Spectrum

1



Most risk assessment tools do not focus on the 'function' of risk behaviours (i.e. why the individual engages in them and what needs they meet for that individual).

- Therefore, even if they capture behaviours exhibited by offenders with ASD, they do not distinguish why this behaviour is carried out. Thus, the depth of formulations and their utility to inform rehabilitation will be limited.
- The FARAS guidelines address how to delineate the autistic functions of behaviour and hence may add depth and specificity to standard risk assessments as well as help inform rehabilitation pathways for offenders on the autistic spectrum.

FARAS

Framework for the

Assessment of

Risk & Protection in Offenders on the

Autistic

Spectrum

A Guide for Risk Assessors Working with Offenders on the Autistic Spectrum





Deviant Behavior



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Clinical profile, risk, and critical factors and the application of the "path toward intended violence" model in the case of mass shooter Dylann Roof

C. S. Allely & L. Faccini

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Dylann Roof

Dylann Roof is an American white supremacist and mass murderer convicted in December 2016 of perpetrating the Charleston church shooting on June 17, 2015.

During a prayer service at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Roof killed nine people, all African Americans, including senior pastor and state senator Clementa C. Pinckney, and injured one other person.



University of **Salford** MANCHESTER





The Last Rhodesian Website Discovery

- Three days after the shooting, a website titled The Last Rhodesian was discovered and later confirmed by officials to be owned by Roof.
- The website contained photos of Roof posing with symbols of white supremacy and neo-Nazism, along with a manifesto in which he outlined his views toward blacks, among other peoples.
- He also claimed in the manifesto to have developed his white supremacist views after reading about the 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin and "black-on-white crime."



"The event that truly awakened me was the Trayvon Martin case. I kept hearing and seeing his name, and eventually I decided to look him up. I read the Wikipedia article and right away I was unable to understand what the big deal was. It was obvious that Zimmerman was in the right. But more importantly this prompted me to type in the words "black on White crime" into Google, and I have never been the same since that day. The first website I came to was the Council of Conservative Citizens. There were pages upon pages of these brutal black on White murders. I was in disbelief. At this moment I realized that something was very wrong. How could the news be blowing up the Trayvon Martin case while hundreds of these black on White murders got ignored?" (Roof, Manifesto).



Some examples of the pictures that Dylann uploaded onto his website.....

















Psychiatric Evalutions

- Robison, J. E. (2016). Final Report for Defense Counsel. US vs. Dylann Roof,
- Moberg, P. J. (2016). Paul J. Moberg evaluation of Dylann Roof.
 Neuropsychological and Facial Anthropometric Evaluation.
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- Ballenger, J. C. (2016). Evaluation of Competency to Stand Trial. 18 U.S.C. 4247 (Section 4241).
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Clinical Profile of Dylann Roof

 Rachel Loftin PhD, retained by Dylann Roof's defense attorneys in June 2016 to conduct a psychological evaluation of Mr. Roof with a particular focus on whether he met criteria for diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.

Measures Administered

- Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, Second Edition (ADOS2)
- Scales of Independent Behavior, Revised (SIB-R)
- Comprehensive Assessment of Spoken Language (CASL)
- Test Of Problem Solving, Second Addition (TOPS)
- Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function-Adult (BRIEF)
- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV)— Comprehension Subtest



Clinical Profile of Dylann Roof ASD: Adolescent & Adult Development

- The social-communication challenges reported in childhood worsened in adolescence and young adulthood.
- Concurrently, beginning in 9th grade,
 Dylann's other psychiatric symptoms (social anxiety, delusional beliefs, disordered thinking, paranoia) worsened.
- Among reporters and across interview formats (e.g., grand jury testimony, interviews with federal agents, social historian interviews, and diagnostic interviews), there was consensus in describing Dylann as polite, sweet and quiet. However, he struggled in many areas of social-communication.





Clinical Profile of Dylann Roof

- No apparent recognition that he was making statements that might be offensive (p25).
- Also seem genuinely naïve when talking about the aftermath of his crime.
- Dylann was also naïve in his understanding of how his actions affected others.
- Despite his reported biases about various groups of people, when interacting 1:1 with individuals, Dylann's presentation is not consistent with his stated beliefs.





Clinical Profile of Dylann Roof

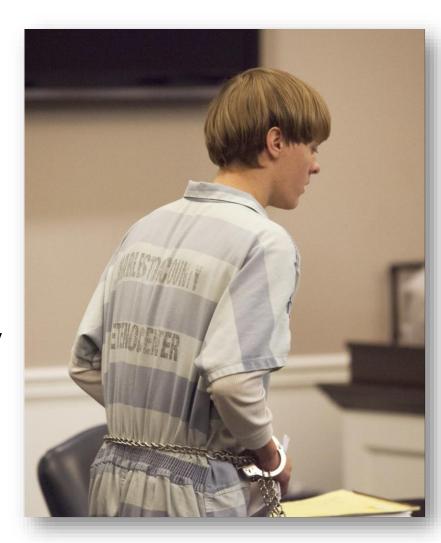
- In cognitive assessment meant to assess primarily fact-based social knowledge, Dylann performed quite well (WAIS-IV).
- On formal measures of social problem solving ability (TOPS-2), which included scenarios of social situations, specific areas of concern were evident. His ability to interpret other's perspectives and transfer insights was impaired.
- Performed at about the level of a 14-year old when asked to interpret others' perspectives. His difficulty imagining himself in another person's place made it impossible for him to generate appropriate responses.





Clinical Profile of Dylann Roof Restricted-Repetitive Behaviors and Interests in Adolescence/ Adulthood

- Intense preoccupation with particular topics.
 Dylann pursued his preoccupation with racism with an autistic intensity. It pervaded all aspects of his life.
- Unusual sensory interests or aversions.
 Shortly before the time of the crime, Dylann started wearing 2 pairs of pants at a time.
- Several people testified that Dylann is not physically affectionate - sensory abnormality known as tactile sensitivity.
- Dylann's fascination with clothing and insistence on specific articles of clothing is odd. His jumpsuit in jail is an area of obsession.





Clinical Profile of Dylann Roof Restricted-Repetitive Behaviors and Interests

- Both the intensity of Roof's interests and the intensity with which he pursued his interests is characteristic of individuals with ASD.
- Spent a substantial amount of time researching "black on white crime" in addition to other race-related topics.
- One of the potential explanations for why racist ideas were so appealing to Roof may be due to his ASD and OCD-like symptoms, specifically the strong need for order.
- The racist ideology he immersed in on the internet offered a clarity and rigidity
 of racial categories which enable Roof, an individual with poor social insight
 and ability to understand high level social behaviors, to "organize people and
 make sense of the world" (Loftin, 2016, pp. 55).



CO-OCCURRING PSYCHIATRIC CONDITIONS & DETERIORATION

Dylann's Developmental Trajectory

- Symptoms of ASD from an early age but did not receive appropriate treatment.
 Over time without development of appropriate social skills, his stress in social situations amplified with anxiety so severe he rarely left the house.
- Alone with the Internet and his psychiatric disorders, Dylann's thinking became increasingly disconnected from reality.
- Without a supportive social network or other protective factors in place, symptoms of anxiety, depression, disordered thinking, and delusions grew.





Disordered Thought: Delusions, Paranoia, and Other Unusual Thinking





Preoccupation with various somatic beliefs, some of which are delusional (Maddox, 2016)

- Believes head is "lopsided."
- Believes the right side of his ribcage is smaller than the left, and he has said that the right side of his body is a "eunuch."
- Believes that one side of his face, especially along the jaw-line, is masculine and the right side is "feminine."
- Believes his right leg is shorter than his left; believes his left foot is flat; the right side of his chest is smaller/has less muscle; his right arm is bigger & his left arm is smaller.
- Believes the testosterone in his body "pools" on his left side, and that this is the cause of these perceived defects.
- Preoccupation with losing his hair.
- Somatic preoccupation with his forehead.



Preoccupation with various somatic beliefs, some of which are delusional (Maddox, 2016)

- Preoccupied with the idea that he had cancer of the lymph nodes before his charges.
- Throughout every evaluation he is preoccupied with his thyroid condition.
- He asked for research about thyroid disease and its treatment; he is afraid to initiate treatment for his thyroid; he is afraid that if a race war comes and he starts medication, then he would not be able to continue his medication during the race war, and so he is afraid to start treatment.





Paranoia: A sense that the world is unsafe, threatening and rejecting

Dr Maddox highlighted a number of observations that she made during her assessment of Roof including:

- Preoccupation surrounding the notion that someone will stab him "150 times", bringing this up on two separate occasions and using the exact same figure of the number of times he would be stabbed.
- In the past he has researched and believed in a number of different conspiracy theories (e.g., vaccinations cause leukemia).
- Preoccupied with his belief that he lives in an unsafe world (Maddox, 2016) and also "preoccupied with the idea that white people are under attack".



Paranoia: A sense that the world is unsafe, threatening and rejecting

- In Dr Loftin's report, she also noted that his feelings of unsafety included a fear of being contaminated from contact with chemicals and cleaners.
- In a video visit on August 21, 2016 with his parents, Dylann talks about chemtrails, the conspiracy theory that the government pumps chemicals into the sky via airplanes. Dylann said that 'they' (the government) are spraying lithium (a mood stabilizer used to treat bipolar disorder) in the chemtrails.





Grandiose Beliefs

- Dr Maddox also identified a number of grandiose beliefs that Roof holds. For instance, he thinks that if he met the federal prosecutors, they would not give him the death sentence because they would like him.
- He also believed the same of Judge Gergel (if he was the one that would be sentencing him) because Judge Gergel had smiled at him and that must mean that he likes him.
- He also believed that if prosecutor Scarlett Wilson met him she would also like him and would withdraw her request for the death penalty. He also told Dr Maddox that when the race war starts the prison guards will side with him and a "coup d'etat" will take place. Roof has said that the guards will help him escape out of prison when this occurs.
- He believes that the chances of him getting a death sentence is only "30% (Maddox, 2016). Roof also informed Dr Loftin that if he gets the death penalty, he does not expect to die as he believes that he will be rescued when "the race war breaks out."

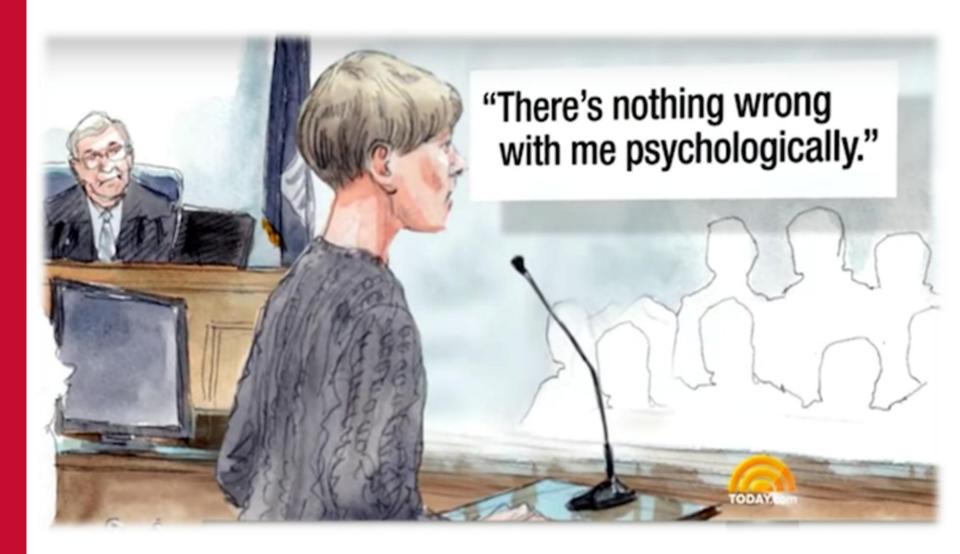


Diagnostic Conclusion: Summary

Maddox (2016) diagnosed Roof (to a reasonable degree of medical certainty) with the following:

- 1.Autism Spectrum Disorder (requiring support) with no comorbid intellectual impairment, and no comorbid language impairment;
- 2.Other Specified Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorder (Attenuated psychosis);
- 3. Other Specified Anxiety Disorder
- 4. Alcohol Use Disorder, In a Controlled Environment
- **5.**Hashimoto's Thyroiditis*.

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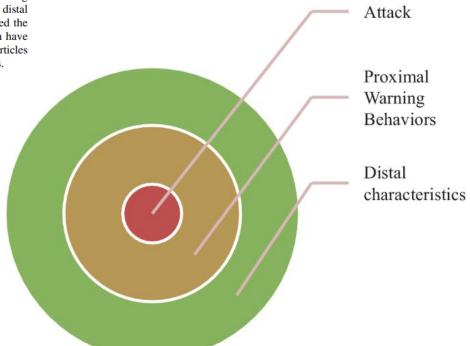
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The Feasibility and Utility of the Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18): A Review and Recommendations

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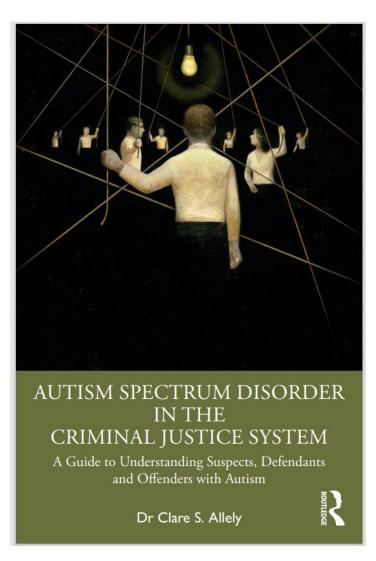
The ability to accurately predict the risk of an individual committing an act of targeted violence is likely to be impossible given the low base rate of these acts (Goodwill & Meloy, 2019). Nevertheless, prevention is possible if there is a focus on fact-based behaviors, and threat management is in place. The Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP-18; Meloy, Habermeyer & Guldimann, 2015; Meloy, Roshdi, et al., 2015; Meloy & Gill, 2016; Meloy, 2017) is a collection of 18 behavior-based warning signs for terror incidents. There are eight proximal characteristics and 10 distal characteristics. The aim of this review was to identify studies which have utilized the TRAP-18 either prospectively (operational use) or retroactively or studies which have investigated the validity and reliability of the TRAP-18. A total of 17 relevant articles were identified in the review including six case studies and 11 empirical articles.



² Aurora Police Department Targeted Violence Prevention, Colorado, United States



How Certain Features of ASD may Provide the Context of Vulnerability to Engaging in a Number of Types of Offending Behaviours



- Arson
- Sexual Offences (Offline and Online)
- Cybercrime
- Violent Offending
- Radicalisation and Extremism
- Extreme Violence
- Stalking



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