

Living well in difference: The IC Thinking approach

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IC thinking™



The A, B, Cs of where we are going

- A. Concept of IC (Integrative Complexity): Basis in research
- B. Use of IC as an educational intervention: Basis in reality
- C. Implications of IC for your work: Basis for impact



A. Concept of IC (Integrative Complexity):

Basis in research



Examples of IC Thinking Interventions

Being Muslim Being Scottish

LIFE IN SCOTLAND



OMAR:

"I think there are a lot of distorted images of young Muslims like me, in the media, and I think that needs to be changed... As a Muslim I want to be a good person; that's what it's about, and I want people to know that young people like me are just trying to live their lives as best they can"

1



I SEE

LIFE SKILLS FOR A CHANGING SCOTLAND

"Societies which provide well-being and flourishing encourage a strong sense of belonging and allegiance to the group while simultaneously allowing people to express themselves as individuals."

(Carol Craig, The Scots' Crisis in Confidence)

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

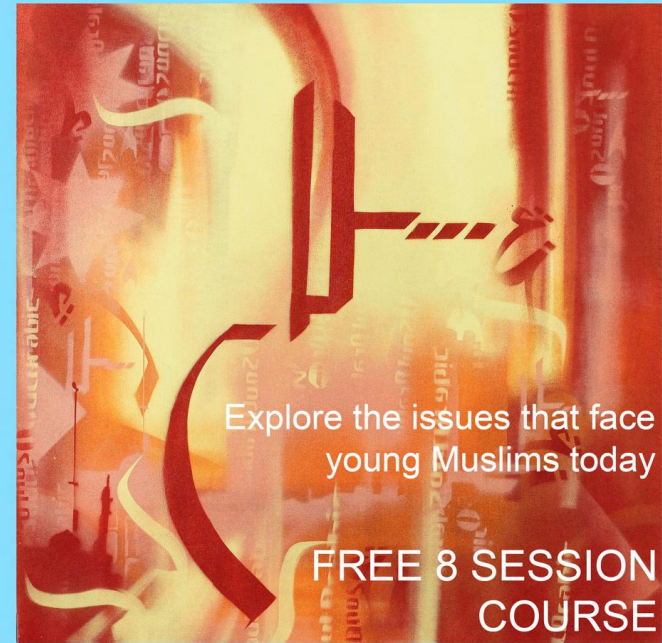


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Being Kenyan

Being Muslim

Being Muslim Being British



all welcome... have your say... meet people...
share food ... get creative...
develop core life skills to build confidence
and address issues





Currently

- Sweden
- Northern Ireland
- England
- Scotland
- Finland
- Bosnia
- Pakistan



- To our knowledge, IC Thinking uses the only empirically based predictive measure in the field of PVE/ CVE.
- Communicated to IC Thinking by experts at UK Home Office, US Pentagon (SMA programme), USDOS (CT Bureau), RAN, and Hedayah Organisation (global PVE think tank) and training centre (Abu Dhabi).
- Members of RAN Europe (Radicalisation Awareness Network) 'pool of experts'



Integrative Complexity (IC)

- Cognitive lens through which we see our social world during conflict (narrow or wide angle lens)
- Psychometric measure with predictive value based on 40 years of research (Suedfeld 2010; Suedfeld & Tetlock, 2014)
- IC = 'I see'. I see my viewpoint, I see your viewpoint, I see a way we can work together, *despite disagreement*.

But why 'IC'?



BAD NEWS: 250 + vulnerability social and personal factors for destructive conflict and violent extremisms

(McCauley & Moskalenko, 2010)

Psychological Factors

- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Sense of purpose, need for meaning
- The need for adventure

Ideology, Beliefs & Values*

Notion that the X poses a threat to group

Simplistic thinking

Justification of discrimination, oppression, retaliation, abuse, or violence to bring about change; **single moral value**

Sociological Motivators

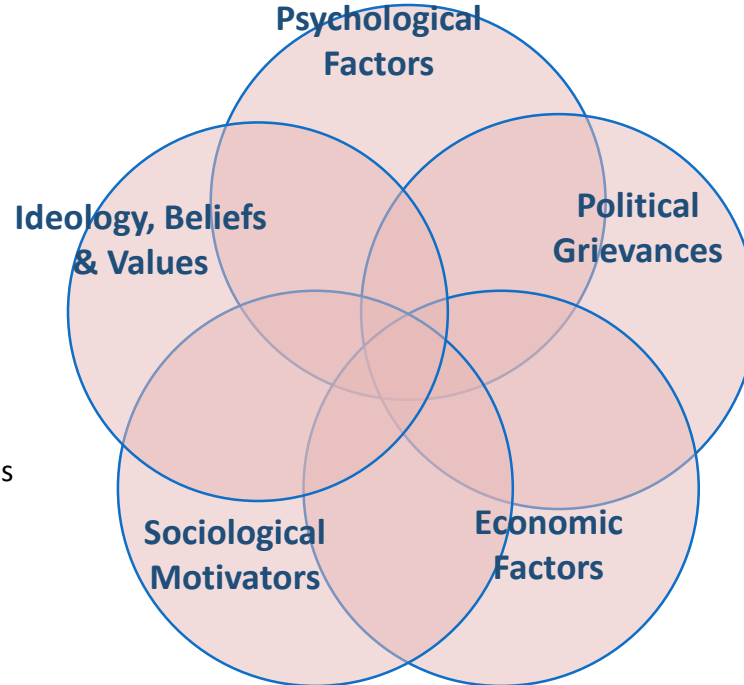
- Alienation and acculturation problems
- Marginalization and discrimination
- Kinship ties

Political Grievances

- Human rights abuses
- Lack of political rights and civil liberties
- Corruption
- Conflict / lack of security

Economic Factors

- Lack of employment
- Relative deprivation
- Financial incentives for membership



We cannot predict the triggers that will move an Individual from extreme opinions to extreme actions.

IN SUMMARY

- Non-predictive: Which 250+ transition points/factors will be the tipping point for any individual?
- 250+ factors show mutual influence and multi-causality (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2010)
- Easy for exploiters to *increase narrowed, tunnel vision thinking* (low IC), as protectors of 'most important' value
- With messages that legitimate discrimination, oppression, and violence



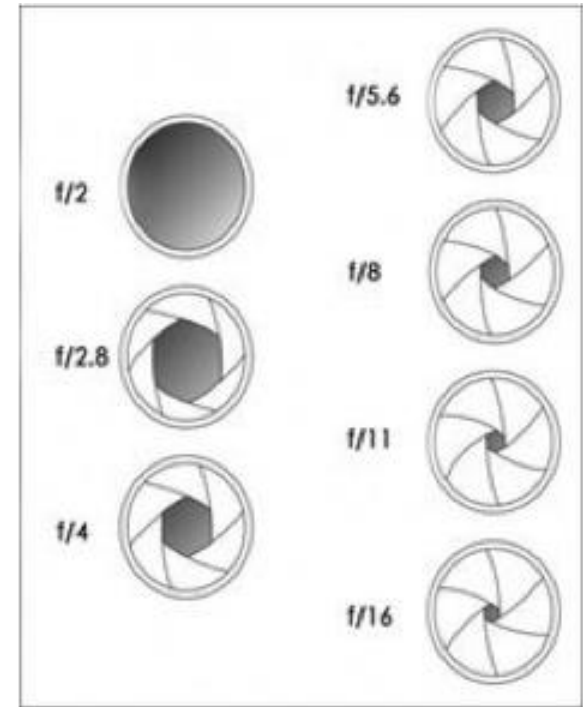
Why 'easy'? Because of how our brains work.

Messages \leftrightarrow Behaviour INTENSIFY the *inhibition* of value pluralism and complex thinking (low IC):

Attention focus shrinks



Brain states shift, affecting
Emotions,
Perceptions,
Behaviours.



One value, Low IC (cognitive lens on social world narrows)...

predicting violence between groups.



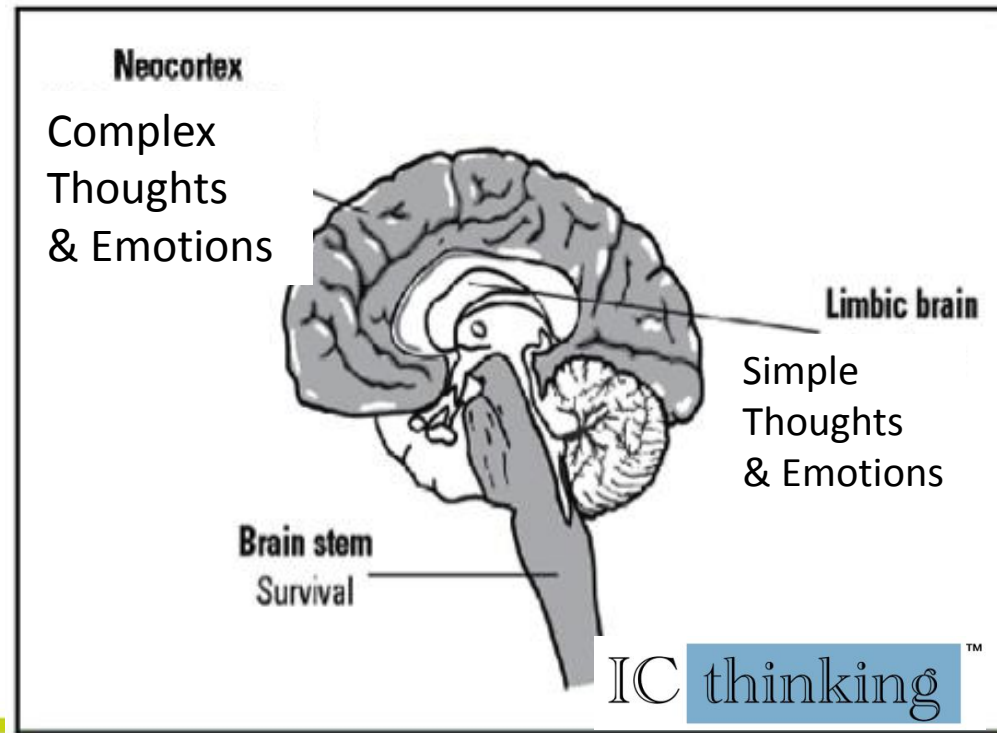
Extremist Ideology/ Narratives/ Propaganda use messages (Winter, 2015)
focus on one moral value and inhibit complex thinking (= low IC)
reinforcing group memberships at all costs

Eliciting brain biases

(limbic dominance: mid brain, rapid, inflexible, closed,
powerful thoughts and emotions)

that can make it easy
to harm the Outgroup
even if contrary to
personal moral standards
'they deserve it'

(fMRI study Cikara, Jenkins, Dufour, & Saxe, in press)



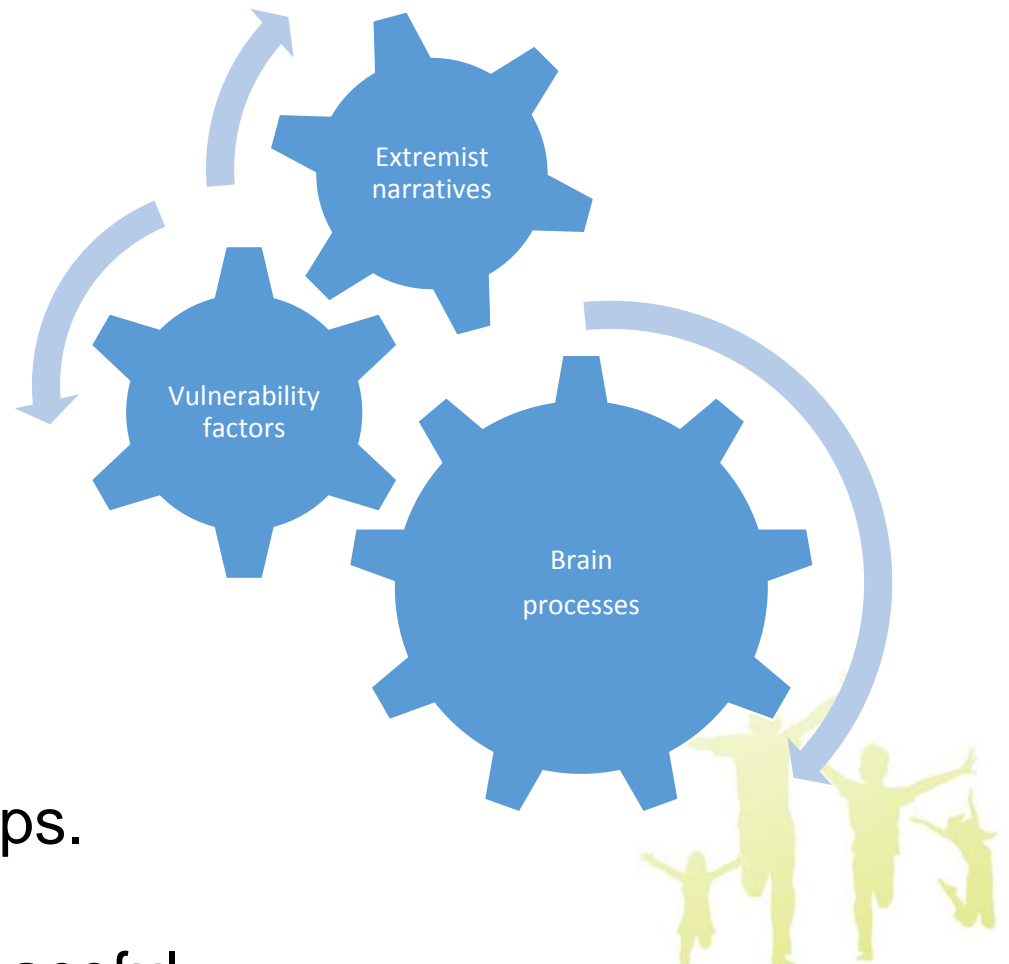
If already leaning toward 'tunnel vision': extremist ideologies/ narratives/ propaganda **make sense!** **'Framing' of the world aligns with/ explains my experience** (Social Movement Theory).

Extremist ideologies

of all kinds built upon
'black and white' (polarised),
'us versus them'
low complexity thinking
(Conway & Conway 2013;
Suedfeld, Cross & Logan 2013).

A drop to low IC predicts
violent conflict between groups.

An increase in IC predicts peaceful
outcomes to conflict (Suedfeld 2013).



Tension in social brain: maintain self / 'tribe' identity and worldview **VERSUS** curiosity and desire to connect with others



- * Threat → Protect/ Defend: Other viewed as symbol of outgroup.
- * Totalist groups: impossible not to adopt group's norms, values.
- * Social rules keep person stuck in low IC, (Violent) conflict increases.

GOOD NEWS: cognitive lens can be widened (measured as raised IC), increasing tolerance and respect for diversity, predicting peaceful outcomes to conflict (Suedfeld, 2003, 2013)

- Accessible (ethical, acceptable)
- Cognitive lens is an AMPLIFIER (Hogg, 2004)
 - low IC lens amplifies low IC input
 - High IC lens amplifies high IC input

IC gains reduce the power of the 250+ factors
Increased tolerance, respect for diversity
Increased resilience



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B. Use of IC as an educational intervention

- Basis in reality



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Holistic model for schools to create IC learning environment

- IC for staff (5 to 16 hours 'CPD', Continuing Professional Development)
- IC for students (typically 16 contact hours, 2 hour sessions over 8 weeks)
- IC for families (with childcare)
- IC for NGO staff working in schools



Collaborative partnerships: Local schools and researchers

E.g.,

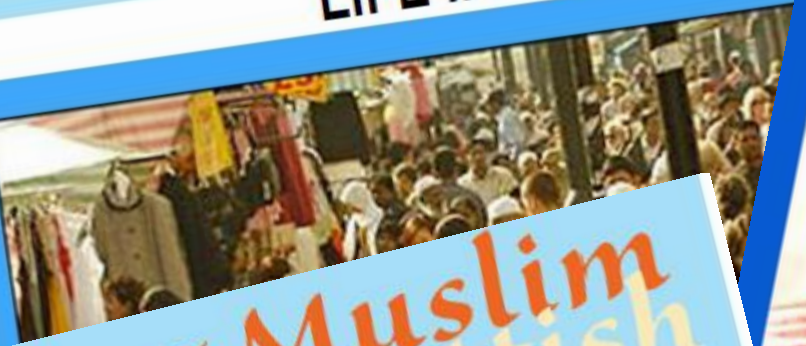
- Assess and revise existing materials for leveraging IC
- Design, develop, pilot, test, embed new IC materials in local schools and organisations for sustainability
- Combine existing and new IC materials

Clothe IC method in local culture so participants recognise and inhabit course material as their own.



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Being Muslim
Being Scottish
LIFE IN SCOTLAND



Being Muslim
Being Scottish



Being Muslim
Being Scottish
EQUALITY

Being Muslim
Being Scottish
CULTURE CLASH?
SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Being Muslim
Being Scottish
PEACE OR FITNA?



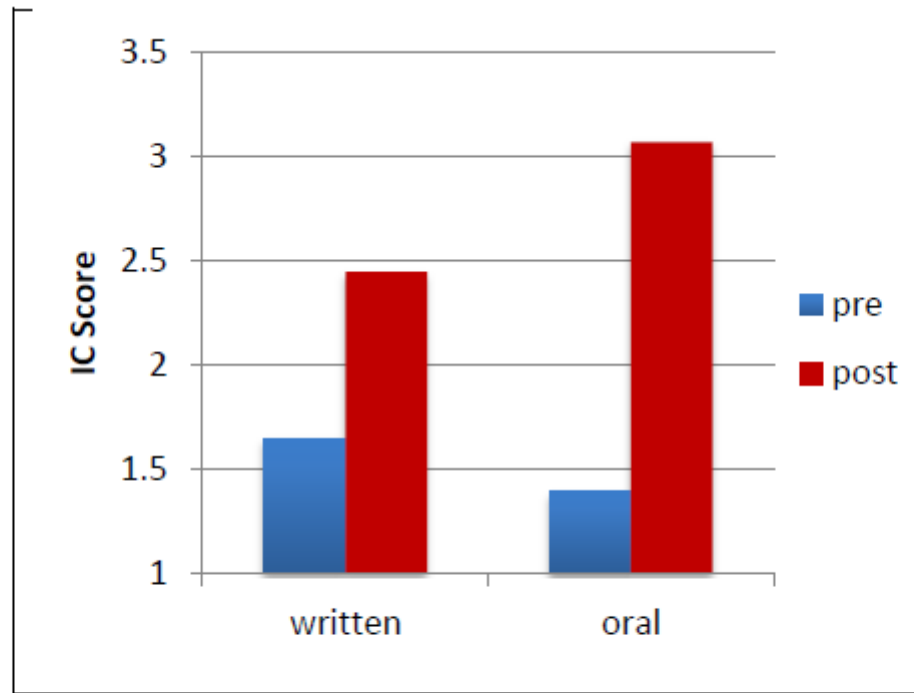
Being Muslim
Being Scottish
JUSTICE AND MONEY

Being Muslim
Being Scottish
PLEASURE AND PURITY



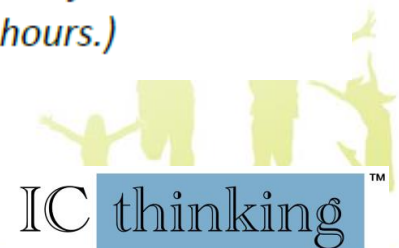
Over 6 years, 50 out of 50 group interventions (different demographics, contexts, conflicts, extremisms)

**A Group
measure to
solve a
group
problem**



**Plus Resilience
measures**

*IC gains after a sixteen contact hour intervention,
assessed via comparisons of participants' written and oral responses, before and after the course.
(Smaller IC increases can occur after an intervention of just a few hours.)*



I SEE
LIFE SKILLS FOR A CHANGING SCOTLAND

"Societies which provide well-being and flourishing..."

I SEE
LIFE SKILLS FOR A CHANGING SCOTLAND

FEELING GOOD

"Belonging to a group is fundamental to being human... of who we are, belong part of family"

I SEE
LIFE SKILLS FOR A CHANGING SCOTLAND

CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

"Life is all about relationships... Some want the everyone the ce—even in the to different, I"

I SEE
LIFE SKILLS FOR A CHANGING SCOTLAND

CONFIDENCE

"Generally people are at their most confident when they..."

I SEE
LIFE SKILLS FOR A CHANGING SCOTLAND

EMOTIONS

"Empathy is an important part of emotional intelligence. Empathy means being able to imagine how the other person feels. It is an important skill to have for the workplace as well as close relationships. We need to anticipate how our actions, behaviours and words, might affect other people. We need to imagine ourselves into the shoes of another person."

I SEE
LIFE SKILLS FOR A CHANGING SCOTLAND

LEARNING

"It seems most schools cater to one learning style: learning by yourself - thinking about something rather than doing it".

I SEE
LIFE SKILLS FOR A CHANGING SCOTLAND

YOUR VALUES

"In many Western societies, the nature of religion: Is it a useful cultural relic of historical interest? needs to be eradicated? Is it a pre-Is it essential for human living?"

truth and reality?

C. Implications of IC Method for your work

Basis for impact

- 1) Turn your classroom into a theatre
- 2) Attempt an ambitious integration
- 3) Use the back door
- 4) Confront your inner extremist



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- Implication One: Turn your classroom into a theatre



Implication Two: Attempt an ambitious integration



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Cognitive Psychology
Integrative Complexity
Values pluralism

Neuroscience
Limbic dominance

Emotion Cognition
Affective Reasoning
Empathy, Compassion

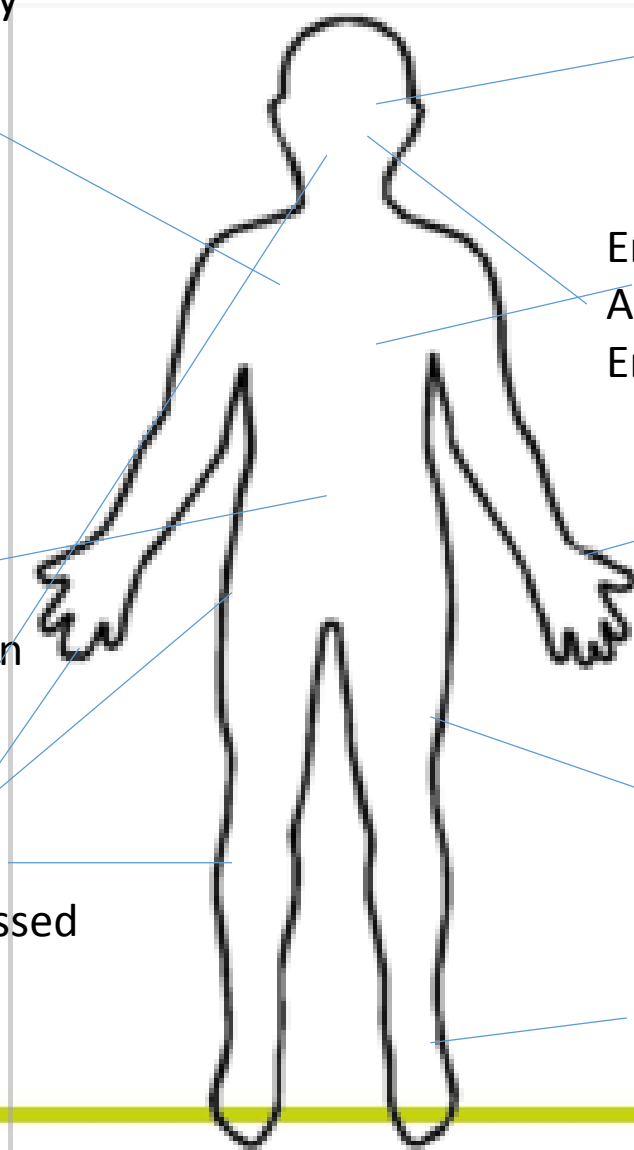
Biology
Stress Response
Embodied Cognition

Social Psychology
Group dynamics
Social Identity

Theatre Arts
Theatre of the Oppressed
Participatory Theatre

Transformative
Education

Community Development



Implication Three: Use the back door



Implication Four: Confront your inner extremist



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Extremisms are...

... polarised positions on any ideological dimension, e.g., political, religious, ethical, moral, philosophical, ecological...

all characterised by low IC

(Suefeld, Cross, Logan, 2013)



“there were a couple of exercises that I went through and I was like, hmmm... maybe I’m not quite as open minded as I thought... That was a bit of a shock because I really did think I was pretty open-minded and quite accepting.”

“And what I experienced was that it held a mirror up to me and let me look at...just how entrenched I am in my views as well. So it’s very, it’s a very deep learning, actually.”



IC Course Guidelines

No one is to be criticized or to be brought down

People listen to each other and show respect

What is said in the room stays in the room (excepting issues relating to safeguarding)

People are supported to think for themselves

Sessions are not dominated by one person or viewpoint

Participants cite these guidelines as part of why the course worked them:

'felt safe',

'no one was telling me I was wrong all the time',

'I could be honest and explore my views, my values'.



IC Thinking supports and complements other approaches:

Contact theory (bring groups together) – requires certain conditions: secure venue, secure communications, participants of equal status, institutional backing, length of time without exiting ...

Dialogue without preparation entrenches and perpetuates conflict (Kelman & Fisher, 2003).

IC Thinking method prepares for successful contact.

Therapy models (mentoring, relationships) – profound but hard to measure, difficult to scale up

IC offers safe group contexts to practice what is learnt during mentoring.



Thank you!

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