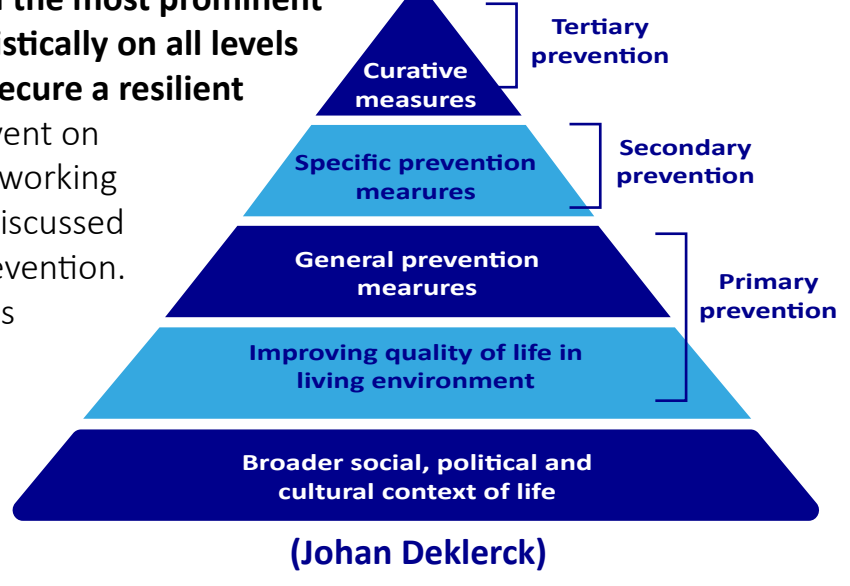


Professionals working with youngsters might encounter radicalisation in different stages of the process. Some youngsters are already fully radicalised and even convicted offenders while others are only starting to develop interest for extremist ideologies, or just have several problems in their personal lives which increase their vulnerability.

Tertiary security measures are often the most prominent after a terrorist attack. Working holistically on all levels of prevention is crucial to achieve/secure a resilient society. During the RAN Thematic event on “Challenges and Solutions related to working with youth on P/CVE”, practitioners discussed specific challenges on all levels of prevention. The challenges and recommendations listed in this infographic can be categorised in these different levels of prevention.



1. Preventing radicalisation in a post-lockdown reality



The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns had a tremendous effect on young people regarding social isolation and mental health issues. Now, group discussions often tend to quickly escalate into polarised disputes.

★ Recommendations:

- Foster a **positive social environment** in your organisation based on caring and supportive relationships
- The social environment determines how young people internalise norms. **Embed and communicate basic ethical principles** and values in your everyday work, such as equality, freedom and empathy.
- **Work according to the needs** of the young people, so they get equipped to face their personal challenges and feel heard and supported within the institution.
- **Check** with your pupils how they experience the social environment your institution wants to foster and let them **co-create**.



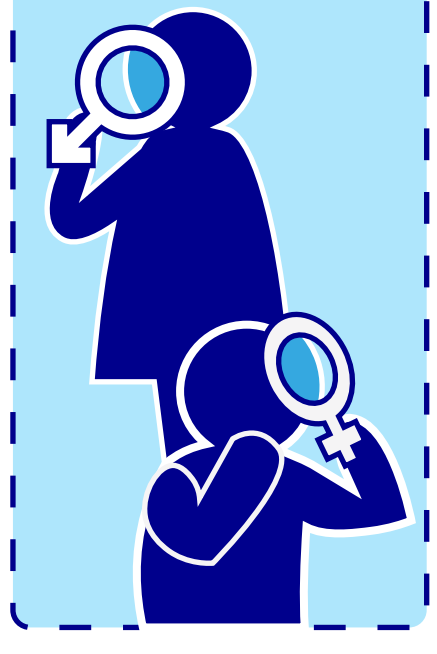
2. Key elements of gender-sensitive P/CVE work

Taking gender into account is essential in P/CVE projects for multiple reasons. Gender equality is under pressure in multiple radicalising ideologies, and some young people might radicalise because of very gender-specific grievances.



★ Recommendations:

- **Promote gender equality** and mutual respect as a non-negotiable principle in your practice, **while** also **acknowledging** the **gender-specific challenges** your pupils face.
- **Be considerate of the setting** for the issues you work on. In some instances, the situation asks for mixed groups while in others, the genders feel more comfortable being apart.
- **Examine your own position** on how gender equality and sensitivity are being practiced within the organisation. Reflect on these definitions and values about gender together with the pupils.
- **Be considerate about labelling** and promoting the project. Avoid stigmatising language or labels which would repel those pupils that might need these projects the most.



3. Working with youth in a post-digital world



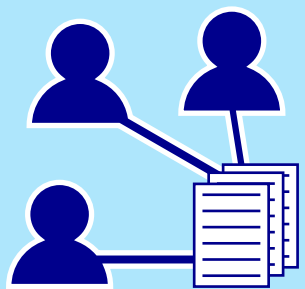
Practitioners struggle to deal with the importance of the online world in young people’s lives. The online world affects the offline world in very complex ways and can cause a gap between friends, families and the social environment. Therefore, working with young people requires being digitally skilful.

★ Recommendations:

- **Stay up to date** about what’s happening online: As a practitioner, you have to be **aware** of which **online trends**, topics of discussion, narratives and platforms your young people engage with. Appoint a specialist that can share this information with your organisation.
- **Involve young people as experts** about the online world: When creating projects when it comes to the online world, invite young people to **give input and co-create this**.
- **Integrate online and offline work**: Since the online and offline world of young people are often integrated, **both worlds need to be integrated in your work** as well.
- **Be present where young people are in a digital space**: if your target group is on TikTok and Instagram, there is no use to be present on Facebook.

Inspiring practice: Presikhaaf University (NL)

This Dutch youth work organisation keeps its network informed about online trends via factsheets which are developed together with young people as insider-experts. These factsheets explain current online developments in detail and indicate how concerning each of these trends are for public security. These overviews are then shared with professionals from other institutions.



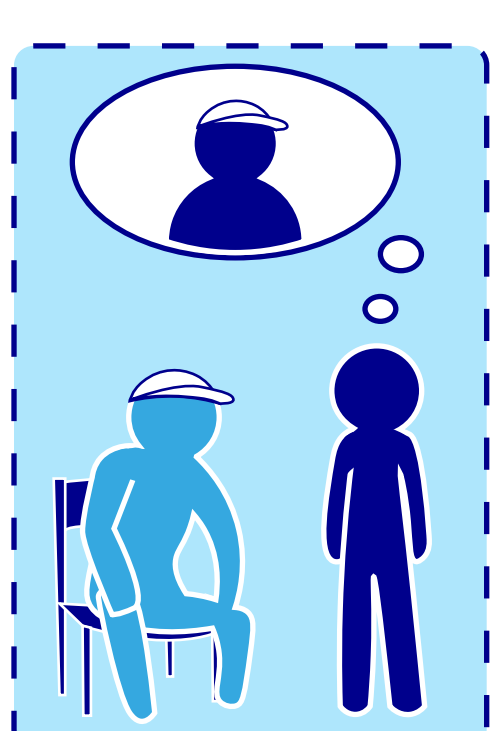
4. Delivering timely and appropriate approaches for at-risk youth

Youth who are labelled as “at-risk” face a number of challenges that do not affect other young people. There are several personal factors (insecurity, lack of agency and mental health issues) and environmental factors (unstable family situations and poverty) that make them more vulnerable to choosing paths that get them and society into trouble.

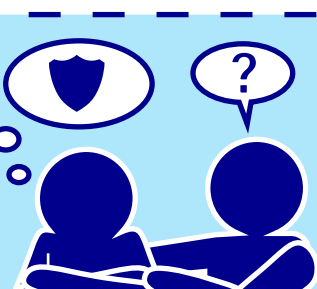


★ Recommendations:

- **Set up interventions for long-term engagement**: interventions can ideally be built on **long-term relations** and **structures** e.g. community centres, youth work, and police (multi-disciplinary).
- **Work with role models**: **Authentic people from the community** talk about **their troubles and experience** can give young people **examples** of how people dealing with similar issues have been able to solve them in a **positive manner**.
- **Giving young people a mission that they deem important themselves**: for example, with open youth work: the **young people themselves decide** whether they want to participate or not. They also decide whether they want to contact the youth workers or not. In addition, interventions in open youth work are **led** by the **young people** themselves.



5. Strategies to work with juvenile offenders



A juvenile offender is a person under the age of 18 who has been charged with a criminal offence. The position of young people in penitentiary institutions might make them more vulnerable to radicalisation.

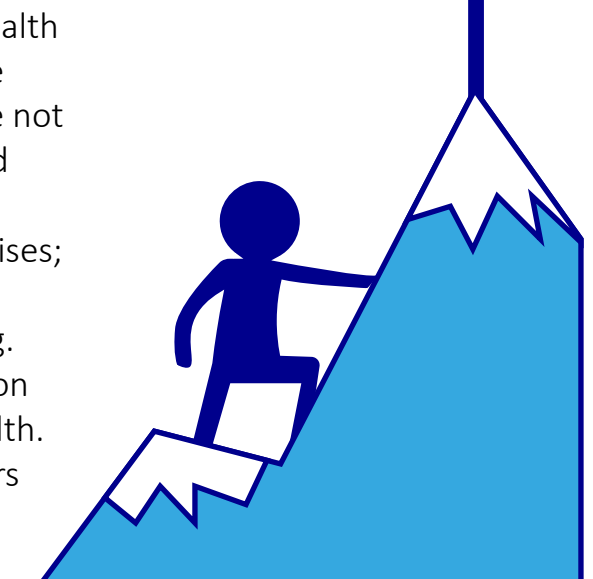
★ Recommendations:

- **Prevention and early intervention before prosecution** takes place may help practitioners to **engage with juvenile offenders**. This makes it **easier** to stay **trusted** and **involved** during the sentence.
- The **professional attitude** of the practitioner is essential. Is the person a threat to society or someone who needs help and support? If the latter, the focus should be on the problems and personal needs of the individual.
- Part of the focus should be on **increasing protective factors**. A holistic approach by **multi-professional teams in a strong network** can work on positive youth development. This requires professional **social support services**.



Remaining challenges:

- Various professionals are faced with the mental health issues of their pupils and realise they must provide support. Most of these professionals, however, are not specialised in mental health and feel like they need more training.
- Young people nowadays are faced with multiple crises; as the pandemic calmed down, the war in Ukraine began, while the climate crisis remains intensifying. Moreover, the constant flow of negative information on social media puts pressure on their mental health.
- Besides individual vulnerability, systemic risk factors like poverty, gang culture, lack of opportunities & inequality severely influence the lives and susceptibility of young people.



For a more extensive description of the outcomes of this meeting and more inspiring practices, please consult our [conclusion paper](#).