Lesson 1: Understanding and preventing extremism

Context

References to the PSHE Association Programme of Study

Key stage 4 Core theme 2: Relationships
- the role peers can play in supporting one another

Key stage 4 Core theme 3: Living in the wider world
- the unacceptability of all forms of discrimination, and the need to challenge it in the wider community, including the workplace
- to think critically about extremism and intolerance in whatever forms they take
- to recognise the shared responsibility to protect the community from violent extremism and how to respond to anything that causes anxiety or concern

This is the first in a series of four lessons. This lesson explores the factors which contribute to extremist ideologies and behaviours. It supports pupils' effectiveness in the wider community by making them aware of how their choices can impact on others, and educates on the positive actions young people themselves can take to reduce tensions in their communities.

The lesson plan is based on a one-hour lesson. While it is always important for PSHE education lessons to be pacy, it is equally important to meet the needs of your pupils. More may be gained from spending longer on exploring in-depth an activity that has fired up discussion and imagination, so long as you are comfortable leading the discussion and feel that the pupils are progressing towards the lesson objectives.

Neither this, nor any of the other lessons, is designed to be taught in isolation, but should always form part of a planned, developmental PSHE education programme.

Learning objectives	Pupils: ▪ define and explain key topic concepts ▪ explore the factors which contribute to extremist ideologies and behaviours ▪ learn how we can support each other to tackle extremism
Intended learning outcomes	Pupils can: ▪ explain what is meant by the terms extremism, terrorism and radicalisation ▪ suggest factors which contribute to the formation of extremist ideologies ▪ list several ways people can reduce the risks associated with extremism in their communities
Resources required	▪ Box or envelope for anonymous questions ▪ Resource 1: *Key concepts handout* – 1 per pupil ▪ Resource 2: *FBI wanted poster* – 1 between 2 pupils ▪ Flip chart or sugar paper and marker pens or post-it notes for group discussion ▪ Small slips of paper for question box
Climate for learning	▪ Consider any sensitivities and prior knowledge about specific pupils' circumstances. ▪ Signpost local and national support groups or helplines. ▪ Invite pupils to write down any questions they have, anonymously, at any time, and collect them in using an anonymous question box or envelope. This should be accessible during and after every lesson. ▪ Establish or reinforce existing ground rules. Add or emphasise any that are especially relevant to this lesson. See the *Teacher's notes* guidance document for further details.
Key vocabulary	extremism, terrorism, violent extremist, fundamentalist, discrimination, radicalisation, alienation
Baseline assessment	### Introduction Explain that today's session introduces the concepts of extremism, terrorism and radicalisation, which we will explore in different ways over the next few lessons. This lesson focuses on the responsibility we all have to keep our community not only safe, but a welcoming place to be, and how these two concepts are linked. Be sure to establish or reinforce existing ground rules. This series of lessons requires pupils to reflect on the language they use and to be particularly respectful of others' contributions to enable positive discussion.

10 mins	**Baseline assessment: Key concepts** Give each pupil a copy of the *Key concepts* handout (Resource 1). Ask pupils to work on their own in just one colour pen to explain what they understand by the terms 'extremism' and 'terrorism'. If they do not know or understand a term, they can leave this blank – the intention is to gauge what they already know and any assumptions or misconceptions which may be present. Then ask pupils to suggest, on their sheet, possible causes of extremism and terrorism, and to add ideas on possible solutions to tackle terrorism. There may well be significant overlap regarding the causes of extremism and terrorism. As this is a baseline assessment, it is important that pupils attempt this on their own before collaborating and discussing with others. Do not provide hints before this activity is completed, so as to gain a true understanding of the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values pupils have on this topic. Advise pupils that you will be drawing on these ideas throughout the lesson and that they will revisit their work later in a different colour, as you are looking to see progress in their learning and any changes in attitudes following this series of lessons.
Core activities **10 mins**	**Discussion questions** Discuss their definitions and offer the definitions below. • **Extremism:** holding extreme political or religious views. [NB: 'fundamentalists' or 'extremists' can include people whose views may be deemed extreme but who do not perform terrorist activities, so are not necessarily breaking the law. This will come out through the next discussion activity.] • **Terrorism:** the unlawful use of violence and intimidation to bring about political or social change. Lead a brief discussion: • *Are extremism and terrorism the same thing?* Many extremists are not terrorists. It is important to make the point that having extreme thoughts or beliefs is not a crime; using unlawful force or threats to support a belief or ideology is, as is encouraging others to act on those beliefs. The issue is that extremist views could lead to a distorted world view which focuses on differences and stigmatises others in the community. This can then lead to violent extremism or terrorism. • *What types of extremist groups are there?* Ideas might include far right groups such as the English Defence League, far left groups like Unite Against Fascism, animal rights

extremism, eco-extremism and religious extremism, including but not restricted to Islamic extremism (other examples include Christian extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Lord's Resistance Army). It is important to make the point that there have been extremists and terrorists from all backgrounds, races and faiths over the years. ISIS/ISIL/IS are in the news a lot at the moment – a group which draws on Islamic ideology – but most Muslims argue that such groups do not truly represent Islam.

- *What do you understand by the word 'radicalisation'?*
  Radicalisation is defined by the UK Government as 'the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups'. Again, stress that this is a process that is not only linked to Islamic extremism.

20 mins

FBI wanted poster

Give out or display Resource 2: *FBI wanted poster*. This is genuine and concerns an animal rights extremist who has carried out a number of attacks. Ask pupils to consider this case and any other examples they can think of as a stimulus for a discussion, in their groups or pairs, on the following question:

- *What factors or feelings might lead people to get involved in terrorism or violent extremism?*

Note answers using a method of your choosing (eg post-it notes, graffiti wall, mind map on large sheets of paper). These responses could include ideas from pupils' baseline mind maps. Advise pupils that they should leave space to annotate around their ideas later.

Ideas could include:

- Alienation/a lack of sense of identity or belonging
- Demonising of others as different, leaving people feeling separate and/or insecure
- Defending their culture, way of life or beliefs
- Sense of injustice regarding the treatment of their culture or beliefs or their life situation
- Pressure or influence from violent extremist groups, including through social media
- Dehumanisation – indifference to violence through violent games, radicalisation process dehumanising 'others'
- Sense of purposelessness
- Lack of understanding of faith
- Lack of critical assessment of information
- Poverty, unemployment, lack of education and the promise of a better life

It is important to reinforce the point that having extreme thoughts or beliefs is not a crime. Using unlawful force or threats to support a

belief or ideology is a crime, as is encouraging others to act on those beliefs. This is an important distinction as there may be members of the class who also feel isolated or that they lack a sense of identity.

Once pupils have noted their ideas, ask them to use a different colour pen to annotate the group's list. Pupils add ideas on what communities can do to help reduce these factors and therefore reduce the risk of people turning to violent extremism as a way to bring about change. For example, pupils might note that a risk factor is 'lack of understanding of faith' so might annotate this with 'RE lessons in schools'.

Once pupils have had time to create their lists, ensure the work is shared amongst the class.

Ask pupils how many of their ideas they could do themselves – eg could they help people feel included, ensure they reported online discrimination etc?

10 mins	### Quote on education

The youth activist Malala Yousafzai, who was attacked by the Taliban (religious extremists), said:

'The extremists are afraid of books and pens. The power of education frightens them.'

Ask pupils to reflect on whether this statement is true. They should share their view with a partner, then feed back key ideas as a class. Pupils might share the following ideas:

- If people learn about others, they will no longer fear them and may learn to appreciate others' differences.
- Lacking education makes people vulnerable to being persuaded by others who seem to know more.
- It is harder to know what to do to tackle extremism if you have not had the opportunity to learn about it.
- If people share opinions which disagree with theirs (because people are better informed) then they may lose support and their group will no longer have any power.

Plenary / Assessment *for* and *of* learning **5 mins**	### Self-assessment First, ask pupils to add to their *Key concepts* starter (Resource 1) in a different colour, adding on any additional learning from today's tasks and amending anything they no longer agree with. This can be kept as evidence of progress. Ask pupils to explain what they have learned about their role in helping their community in today's lesson. This can be noted down to support teacher evaluation and assessment.

5 mins	**Question box**
	Give out question slips. Ask pupils to write any questions or concerns they may have on this topic on their slip of paper. Use these to support adaptation of future lessons in the series.
	Signposting further support
	Ensure that pupils know who can help them with any issues which have come up for them in today's session – eg their tutor or head of year. If pupils have concerns about someone's behaviour, they can contact the NSPCC or their local police station (by calling 101), who can refer the case to specialists on the Channel support team. Inappropriate online content can be reported at: https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
	Either ask all pupils to write down these details (making it optional will deter pupils who may not wish to be seen to be writing them down), or provide them on a handout, and/or display them prominently around the school.
Extension activities / Home learning	*Possible home learning/wider project*: Invite pupils to create a set of images that they feel demonstrate how being part of a diverse community is making people's lives better (this could be within school or in their wider community). Ask groups to be prepared to talk about why they chose these images.