



From Prevention to Resilience: A Whole-of-Community Approach Through the Community Resilience Framework

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From Prevention to Resilience: A Whole-of-Community Approach Through the Community Resilience Framework

By Sabariah Hussin and Muhammad Mubarak Habib Mohamed

SYNOPSIS

Digital ecosystems and AI are reshaping online radicalisation. While Singapore's Whole-of-Government approach remains essential, evolving threats require stronger community resilience. This commentary proposes the Community Resilience Framework, which integrates epistemic, relational, moral, digital, and community resilience to strengthen young people's capacity to resist online extremist influence.

COMMENTARY

The recent detention of a 19-year-old Singaporean under the Internal Security Act (ISA) serves as a timely reminder that the threat of online self-radicalisation continues to evolve. Influenced by multiple, often contradictory extremist narratives encountered online, the case illustrates how online self-radicalisation appears increasingly personalised and digitally mediated.

While each case has its own unique circumstances, together they point to a changing landscape in which extremist beliefs are increasingly formed not within formal organisations or through direct recruitment, but through the cumulative influence of offline psychosocial vulnerabilities and online narratives, algorithmically curated content, and digital communities.

Singapore's Whole-of-Government approach has been central to countering terrorism through coordinated security, rehabilitation, and community initiatives. Alongside these efforts, [SGSecure](#) and the [Religious Rehabilitation Group](#) show how trusted community partnerships strengthen resilience. These measures provide a strong foundation for Singapore's counter-terrorism strategy.

However, the changing dynamics of online self-radicalisation suggest that effective prevention cannot rest on government institutions alone. While government-led initiatives remain indispensable, they should be complemented by community-based approaches that strengthen resilience across society.

This commentary argues that the next advancement in countering online radicalisation lies in adopting a Whole-of-Community Approach through the Community Resilience Framework (CRF), which strengthens the epistemic, relational, moral, digital, and community ecosystems around young people.

From Prevention to Resilience: The Community Resilience Framework

Building resilience requires more than strengthening security measures or expanding online monitoring. Existing approaches to countering violent extremism have understandably focused on identifying vulnerabilities, disrupting extremist networks, and preventing individuals from progressing along pathways of radicalisation.

While these interventions remain indispensable, the increasingly personalised and digitally mediated nature of online self-radicalisation calls for a complementary approach that cultivates the protective capacities that make individuals and communities less susceptible to harmful narratives before their vulnerabilities are exploited.

The CRF is proposed as a complementary model to support this shift. It defines resilience as the dynamic capacity of individuals and communities to think critically, remain ethically grounded, sustain trusted relationships, and respond constructively to uncertainty, injustice, and online manipulation. Resilience is therefore not merely the absence of vulnerability but the presence of adaptive capacities that enable young people to navigate increasingly complex digital environments with confidence, discernment, and a sense of responsibility.

Building on [Michael Ungar](#)'s social-ecological conception of resilience, the CRF conceptualises resilience as a dynamic process that emerges from the interaction between individuals and the social systems that shape their lives. The framework extends this perspective by recognising that, in the digital age, resilience must also encompass the epistemic and digital environments through which young people acquire knowledge, construct identity, and negotiate meaning.

In an era of algorithmic curation, AI-generated content, and fragmented online narratives, resilience depends not only on supportive relationships and community resources but also on the capacity to evaluate information critically and maintain epistemic autonomy. The CRF therefore advances five interdependent domains of resilience that together strengthen young people's capacity to resist manipulation and to engage constructively with an increasingly complex world.

Operationalising the Community Resilience Framework

The Community Resilience Framework is operationalised through five interdependent domains that collectively strengthen resilience against online radicalisation. While existing resilience literature addresses psychological and social resilience, digital radicalisation introduces new vulnerabilities. Therefore, the CRF extends the concept of resilience into five mutually reinforcing domains. These domains are epistemic, relational, moral, digital and community resilience.

Together, they help young people evaluate information critically, sustain trusted relationships, remain ethically grounded, navigate online spaces responsibly, and draw strength from supportive community ecosystems. Rather than functioning as isolated interventions, these domains reinforce one another, creating an ecosystem that enables young people to navigate digital environments with critical thinking, ethical judgement, and social support.

Epistemic resilience forms the foundation of the framework. It enables young people to evaluate competing claims critically, recognise manipulative narratives, and distinguish credible knowledge from ideological distortion. In Singapore, the Religious Rehabilitation Group's counter-narratives and religious literacy initiatives help young people contextualise religious teachings and resist extremist misinterpretations.

Relational resilience recognises that trusted relationships remain among the strongest protective factors against radicalisation. Parents, teachers and community volunteers are especially important, as they create safe spaces for young people to ask difficult questions, seek guidance, and build trust before anonymous online voices fill the gap.

Moral resilience is the capacity to respond to conflict, injustice and uncertainty through ethical reflection rather than emotional reaction. In Singapore's context, this is strengthened through social cohesion, national education initiatives by the Ministry of Education, such as character building, and responsible citizenship. These enable young people to channel moral concern into constructive civic engagement rather than engaging in hostility or violence.

Digital resilience extends beyond digital literacy to include an understanding of algorithmic influence, deepfakes, generative AI and manipulated content. Singapore's digital environment requires young people to engage responsibly online, while technology platforms strengthen safeguards, transparency and safety-by-design measures to reduce the amplification of harmful content.

Finally, *community resilience* reflects the collective capacity of families, schools, faith communities, civil society, industry and government to sustain protective environments. In Singapore, initiatives such as SGSecure, the IRO's interfaith peacebuilding work, and Harmony Circles strengthen trust, social cohesion and whole-of-community preparedness against radicalisation.

Conclusion

The recent ISA case demonstrates that online radicalisation continues to evolve alongside digital advancements. As pathways to radicalisation become more personalised and shaped by diverse online influences, effective responses should complement existing disruption and enforcement measures to strengthen the protective capacities that help young people navigate complexity with confidence and responsibility.

The CRF complements Singapore's existing Whole-of-Government approach by advancing a Whole-of-Community Approach that places resilience at the centre of long-term prevention. By integrating epistemic, relational, moral, digital, and community resilience, the framework recognises that resilience is cultivated not by a single intervention but through sustained partnerships among families, schools, faith communities, civil society, technology platforms, and government institutions.

Ultimately, preventing online radicalisation is not solely about countering extremist narratives. It is about cultivating resilient individuals and communities in which harmful narratives are less likely to take root. Investing in community resilience today is therefore an investment in Singapore's long-term security, social cohesion, and peace.

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