

**Disguised compliance within CVE programs – how can
deception and disguised compliance within
CVE programs be understood, recognised and addressed?**

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2022

**This project was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Home
Affairs and the AVERT Research Network under a Rapid Evidence
Assessment grant**

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Executive summary

- Disguised compliance refers to individuals participating in programs to counter violent extremism (CVE), deceiving and manipulating intervention staff about the degree to which they are deradicalised and disengaged.
- This project investigated the problem of disguised compliance as it relates to CVE programming – specifically case managed programs in the correctional and community context that target convicted terrorists and individuals identified as at risk of radicalisation due to their associations and behaviours
- This project aimed to understand the definitional and behavioural boundaries of disguised compliance, why it arises, the significance of the problem, identify indicators of disguised compliance and strategies to minimise and detect its occurrence.
- There was specific Rapid Evidence Review topics and questions that framed this project, and which are answered in the final section.
- The project was underpinned by three phases: a review of the existing literature across various fields of research; case studies of disguised compliance; interviews with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the area of CVE programming and practice.
- The literature review phase adopted rapid evidence review methods across the disciplines of (1) criminology, (2) child protection, (3) corrections, (4), policing, (5) psychology, (6) philosophy, (7) social work, and (8) security and intelligence. Three hundred and twenty-one sources were identified.
- Three case studies of disguised compliance were identified from open sources, and comprised the cases of Fejzulai, K. (Austria), Abdullah, A. (Germany) and Khan, U. (United Kingdom).
- The SME sample consisted of 24 participants. All participants were involved in CVE programming in the community and correctional context comprising a mix of police and CVE practitioners/managers/case workers. The SMEs spanned participants from Australia (N = 8), Germany (N = 12), the United Kingdom (N = 2) and Indonesia (N=2).
- Limitations with the evidence drawn on in this project and the research methodology need to be kept in mind.
- Findings from the literature review highlight the following:
 - A range of different terminology has been used to describe and conceptualise the term disguised compliance.

- The term disguised compliance captures a range of behaviours aimed at deception and manipulation.
 - An accurate understanding of disguised compliance requires differentiating between deceptive behaviour and intent.
 - The occurrence of disguised compliance is not always underpinned by malicious intent. This is important to consider when it comes to assessing the occurrences of disguised compliance.
 - The issue of social desirability must be considered when assessing the problem of disguised compliance.
 - The occurrence of disguised compliance is influenced by context and individual differences and capacities (i.e., cognitive/psychosocial).
 - Working with intervention clients requires staff to understand factors that might shape the occurrence of disguised compliance.
 - Disguised compliance incorporates various forms of conduct including lying, manipulation, behavioural modification and role playing.
 - The interpretation of behaviours that indicate forms of disguised compliance are influenced by professional biases, assumptions and working practices.
 - While a person might display behaviours indicative of disguised compliance it does not mean that previous actions and engagements were inauthentic.
 - Practitioners are not very effective at detecting the occurrence of deceptive behaviours.
 - The evidence in support of strategies to detect deception and test authenticity is partial and has limitations.
 - Identifying the occurrence of disguised compliance requires a combination of approaches that involve dialogue, encouragement, information gathering, client follow-up and case review, as well as technology enabled methods.
- The three cases of Fejzulai, K. (Austria), Abdullah, A. (Germany) and Khan, U. (United Kingdom) illustrate the risks that can arise from disguised compliance. Reviews of these cases show that while evidence of disguised compliance existed, there were gaps and flaws in the case management, review, monitoring and risk assessment of each individual. Poor information sharing across agencies involved in the monitoring and management of each individual was a problem. Partners and agencies overlooked incongruence in statements, beliefs and actual behaviours across various contexts and

there was a reliance on compliance compared to assessing and testing the authenticity of behavioural change.

- The results from SMEs provide insights and lessons based on practitioner experience.

The SME results have the following implications:

- The occurrence of disguised compliance is highly contextual and shaped by individual motivations and capacities, as well as the broader CVE environment.
- Disguised compliance across the correctional or community context was not judged as prolific or highly prevalent. But neither was it dismissed as a risk.
- Practitioners pointed to the potential unhelpful and detrimental consequences of the debate surrounding the occurrence of disguised compliance amongst CVE program participants.
- Key flags for possible disguised compliance included abrupt and professed change in support for extremist beliefs and an incongruence between statements and behaviours and efforts to deflect, minimise and deny responsibility.
- The occurrence of disguised compliance should not be judged uncritically or downplayed, nor assessed always as evidence of deception underpinned by malicious intent.
- Strategies of authenticity testing need to draw on a variety of information sources and evidence.
- An important strategy to test for the authenticity of client change is assessing statements, responses, individual costs, and behaviours across various contexts and through different questions and forms of engagements with a client.
- It is not helpful or practical for case worker and CVE client engagements to be underpinned by interactions that have the main purpose of detecting deception or false intent.
- Rapport, transparency, and trust building between a case worker and a CVE client are important in managing and detecting disguised compliance.
- Processes relating to case management and review and the use of multi-disciplinary/multi-agency teams is critical in identifying and managing the risks of disguised compliance.
- Disguised compliance can help to calibrate risk assessments, however extremist risk assessment should not undermine or ignore efforts to promote authentic demonstrations of disengagement.

Introduction and aims

Case-managed programs aimed at the rehabilitation of convicted terrorists, or the disengagement of at-risk individuals are a common strategy to counter violent extremism (CVE). In Australia they occur in the correctional and community context (Cherney & Belton 2019, 2021). A challenge for these programs is trying to discern genuine client participation and a desire to change, from disingenuous and deceitful client engagement that aims to deceive staff about the degree to which a person has deradicalised (Cherney, 2022; Paul & Acheson, 2021). This is referred to as the problem of disguised compliance (Paul & Acheson, 2021). In lay terms it can refer to clients “going through the motions” or “faking it” in order to leave the impression they have changed, when in actual fact they have not. The problem of disguised compliance is also relevant to the accuracy of extremist risk assessments undertaken by trained professionals and resulting case formulations about changes in dynamic risk factors. The problems arising from disguised compliance is that some radicalised offenders may be assessed as no longer presenting an on-going risk, when in reality their risk has not diminished.

The aim of this project is to investigate the problem of disguised compliance as it relates to CVE programming – specifically case managed programs in the correctional and community context that target convicted terrorists and individuals identified as at risk of radicalisation due to their associations and behaviours. Our definition of violent extremism includes offending across, far left, far right, Islamists and single-issue ideologies. To date there has been one review into the existence of disguised compliance in the area of CVE programming (Paul & Acheson, 2021). This rapid evidence review was required to consider the following topics and questions:

1. A brief review of how disguised compliance is defined in the literature.
2. What distinguishing factors, if any, are present in relation to disguised compliance between post-conviction terrorist offenders and those yet to offend?
3. Do strategies of disguised compliance vary depending on which ideological group, movement or cause individuals identify with, e.g., are there differences in how and at what stage/s disguised compliance may manifest across individuals allied with Islamist versus right-wing extremist or other ideological or motivational contexts?
4. Where do metrics of authenticity sit within risk assessment frameworks?
5. What countermeasures are used by program participants to defeat forms of authenticity testing? How can such countermeasures be successfully identified and overcome by professionals?

The next section outlines the project's methodology. It should be emphasised that while we followed systematic review principles relating to phase 1, we have not carried out a traditional systematic review due to the fact this project did not set out to specifically assess which interventions are effective in detecting and preventing disguised compliance. The aim has been to draw on existing literature from a diverse range of fields, case studies and experience of practitioners to inform the analysis of disguised compliance and identify what can be done to minimise and mitigate its occurrence.

Method

Three phases of investigation underpin the methodology.

Review method for disguised compliance relevant literature

This project utilised a rapid review methodology. Rapid reviews allow for the systematic and simplified synthesis of knowledge (Tricco et al., 2015). This type of synthesis employs components of systematic review methods such as the formation of inclusion/exclusion criteria, developing a search strategy, systematically searching databases, and title, abstract, and full-text screening (Tawfik et al., 2019). However, in a rapid review, the inclusion and exclusion criteria are less restrictive which makes the process less stringent and time consuming, compared to a systematic review. Streamlined methods in rapid reviews enable searches to be limited to published literature only, include only certain databases, and limit the inclusion criteria by date and language (Tricco et al., 2015). This rapid review aimed to examine published material pertaining to the topic of disguised compliance and its' behavioural indicators. Published materials included articles, books, book chapters, discussion papers, meta-analyses, reports, systematic reviews, and theses.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

There were no limitations placed on inclusion in relation to study design and type of outcome. For material to be included in the review, the information needed to be deemed "relevant" to the topic of disguised compliance. Material was deemed relevant if the publication contained information on (1) disguised compliance, (2) false compliance, (3) compliance, (4) indicators of disguised compliance (5) methods of detecting deception, (6) the prevention of disguised compliance, and (7) how to manage the risk of disguised compliance.

Exclusion criteria were as follows: (1) publications which did not provide relevant information on behavioural modification, disguised compliance, deception, deception

techniques, false compliance, lying, manipulation, or role-playing; (2) publications which were duplicates of previous search results or contained the same information from the same authors in earlier publications; (3) publications which contained editorials, author responses, and reviews of existing publications (Tawfik et al., 2019); (4) publications which only provided abstracts; (5) publications which were published before 1950 (Higgins, Eggins, Mazerolle, & Stanko, 2014); (6) publications for which the full-text version of the publication could not be sourced (Tawfik et al., 2019); and (7) publications which were not published in the English language and could not be translated into the English language using software such as Google Translate. The inclusion criteria for the rapid review were as follows: (1) source must have been published; (2) considered disguised compliance or an adjacently related concept, and (3) was derived from a reputable source. Reputable sources were repositories such as academic databases, specified government websites, counter-terrorism policy centres, and counter-terrorism organisations. There were no restrictions placed on the country of origin. Furthermore, no restrictions were placed on the type of methodology employed. Only publications from the disciplines of (1) criminology, (2) child protection, (3) corrections, (4), policing, (5) psychology, (6) philosophy, (7) social work, and (8) security and intelligence were included.

Search Strategy

A standard search strategy was developed in consultation with the project team. The basic search strategy was built around the research questions and the team's working understanding of disguised compliance. The search strategy was constructed based on nine free-text search terms outline in Table 1. These search terms were expected to retrieve eligible publications through both the title and abstract, as well as the subject indexing functions on academic databases and other repositories (Tawfik et al., 2019). The free-text terms included outcomes of disguised compliance as well as alternative terms for disguised compliance.

Given the scarcity of information on disguised compliance (Acheson & Paul, 2021), the inclusion criteria were broad and thus the search terms were expected to elicit voluminous results. Ongoing refinement of the search terms was implemented while conducting the search protocol. The refinement of the search terms was made conducting searches on academic databases and comparing initial return results with refined returned results. Search terms were refined using syntax modifications, including Boolean operators, inclusion and exclusion parameters, and selection restrictors in databases. Search terms were refined until the return results became too limited, meaning that eligible publications may have been excluded.

Therefore, the search terms were reviewed and refined according to the syntax operations of the database or repository.

Table 1. Free-text search terms for the Disguised Compliance Rapid Review

Disguised Compliance Search Terms	
“Behavioural+modification”	“False+compliance”
“Disguised+compliance”	“Lying”
“Deception”	“Manipulation”
“Deception+techniques”	“Role+playing”
“Falsification” AND “evidence”	

Databases and Importation of Literature

In identifying potentially relevant publications for inclusion in the rapid review, the following electronic databases were searched using the search syntax: (1) AFPD; (2) AGIS Plus; (3) British Academy Scholarship Online; (4) Campbell Collaboration Research Library; (5) CINCH: Australian Criminology Database; (6) JSTOR; (7) Scopus; and (8) Web of Science; The review was limited to publications from 1950 onwards. The publication search was supplemented by a targeted search of additional repositories including the Australian Institute of Criminology, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, and the Violence Prevention Network. In addition, relevant references from eligible publications were included in the review (Tricco et al., 2015). Each of the nine free-text search terms were run through each of the above databases and repositories.

All the relevant references were exported into an EndNote Library. Each of these EndNote libraries was screened for duplicates. The removal of duplicates is essential in rapid reviews (Higginson et al., 2014; Tawfiks et al., 2019; Tricco et al., 2015). All references which included the (1) identical title, (2) identical author/s, (3) year of publication, (4) identical abstract and information, and (5) identical publication information were deleted. The remaining references were filed into one common EndNote Library. The refined EndNote Library contained the name/s of the authors, year of publication, publication information, and abstract of the eligible references. Once this process was completed, the publications were eligible for the screening process.

Screening Process and Full-text Downloading

The screening process included two stages. The first stage was screening the title and abstract of eligible references. The screening criteria for this stage were established prior to the beginning the review. Abstracts which did not mention (1) behavioural modification; (2) disguised compliance; (3) compliance; (4) deception; (5) deception techniques; (6) false compliance; (7) falsification of evidence; (8) lying; (9) manipulation; or (10) role-playing were

removed from the review. Titles and abstracts which referenced any of these terms was included in the next stage of screening. In cases where a publication's eligibility was unclear, the reference was exported to a discussion folder. The reference would be discussed by the project team and the project lead made the final decision on the reference's eligibility.

Results

In total, 13, 279 citations and 871 potentially relevant full-text publications were screened. Subsequently, 321 publications met the eligibility criteria and were included in the final EndNote Library. A PRISMA style flow chart for the identification, screening and final included studies is presented in diagram 1 below. The EndNote Library was thematically organised according to the research questions and the expected structure of the rapid review report (see table two).

Figure 1: Flow chart of screening and study exclusion/inclusion

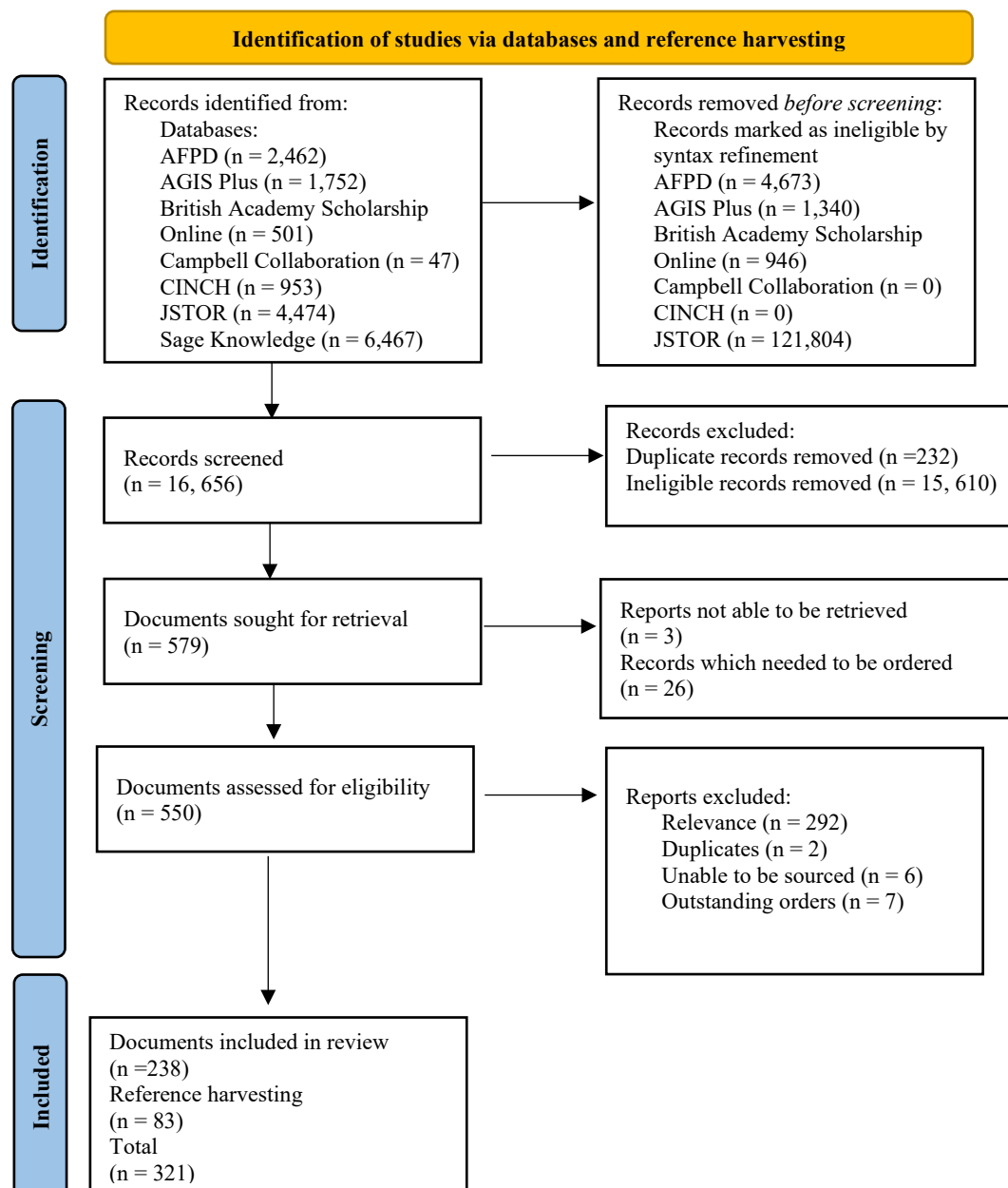


Table 2. Thematic Organisational Logic

Thematic Organisation Structure for the EndNote Library
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Folder for literature on the definitions of disguised compliance/false compliance. ▪ Folder for literature on deception and the relationship between deception and intention. ▪ Folder for literature on how and why disguised compliance arises. ▪ Folder for literature on the characteristics of and behaviours associated with disguised compliance. ▪ Folder for the literature which identifies gaps in the current knowledge base. ▪ Folder for the literature on detection techniques. ▪ Folder for the literature on prevention methods. ▪ Folder for the literature on risk and reintegration.

Case studies

There have been several cases of professed deradicalised individuals going on to commit attacks that have highlighted the risks of disguised compliance. Three such cases are reviewed in this report. These are the cases of Fejzulai, K (Austria), Abdullah A (Germany) and Khan U (United Kingdom). These three cases have been selected because there has been reporting on these individuals in the English and non-English speaking media, with each cited as examples of disguised compliance in various reporting. Information for the three case studies were collated from open sources derived from media reports and coronial inquests. The limitations of such sources need to be kept in mind. The aim in using these case studies is to detail the background facts of these cases, the reported nature of the deception that occurred and what observations and lessons were identified post the attacks about the risks and detection of disguised compliance. Non-English speaking sources were translated using Google translate.

Subject Matter Expert interview method

To compliment the evidence review, interviews were also conducted with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Interviews with SMEs have been useful in extracting insights to inform the development of learning materials and programs in areas related to public health, occupational health and safety, national security and social work. The aim is to draw on the collective insights of relevant experts, stakeholders and practitioners. The SME sample comprised 24 participants. All participants were involved in CVE programming in the community and correctional context comprising a mix of police and practitioners/managers/case workers. They worked in the context of government, police and NGO delivered programs. They were identified and recruited through the networks of Cherney and Koehler. All participants had experience in delivering interventions and engaging both convicted terrorists and individuals identified as at risk of radicalisation. The SMEs spanned participants from Australia (N = 8), Germany (N = 12), the United Kingdom (N = 2) and Indonesia (N=2).

Results

Part 1: Disguised compliance related literature

Definitional and conceptual boundaries of disguised compliance

In the context of the criminal justice system, disguised compliance is the term given to the act of deceiving professional decision-makers about the authenticity and sincerity of an offender's rehabilitation (Acheson & Paul, 2019). However, this definition does not encapsulate the full complexity of the concept and the ongoing debate surrounding the term and its conceptual ambiguities.

Conceptual Boundaries of Disguised Compliance

The concept of disguised compliance originally emerged in the social work/child protection literature and was coined as way of describing how family members reacted when professionals engaged them in a more controlling way (Reder, Duncan, & Gray, 1993). Disguised compliance has been described as both a diffusion and neutralisation tactic used by family members to display the appearance of cooperation, which is aimed at returning the relationship with a social worker/child protection officer to its previous status quo. Taken together, disguised compliance effectively neutralises the professions authority and ability to meaningfully effect change (Reder, Duncan, & Gray, 1993).

In the field of social work, disguised compliance has been conceptualised as behaviours by which parents and guardians aim to dupe professionals into believing they are engaging with proscribed social work interventions when there is no genuine intention of doing so (Leigh et al., 2020). Social workers contend that in cases of disguised compliance, parents are only cooperating to create a false impression, rather than genuinely working towards meaningful change. The term false compliance, in reference to disguised compliance, is more often adopted in the social work literature and includes family members adopting a cooperative disposition for the purpose of confusing professionals (Shemmings, Shemmings, & Cook, 2012).

In practice, social workers can view disguised compliance as form of “concealed disagreement”, in that rather than openly challenge an intervention plan, families will express their disagreement through concealment and obfuscation. Consequently, researchers have argued that a more accurate term would be that of ‘disguised resistance’ and ‘disguised non-compliance’. It is important to note that within the social work literature, disguised compliance is identified as an anomaly (Hart, 2017).

One area of research which further highlights the conceptual ambiguities of the term disguised compliance, is work around the notion of synthetic behaviour (Tunis & Rosnow,

1983). Synthetic behaviour describes the discrepancy between purported actions and the underlying intention behind the action – which is malevolent. Synthetic behaviour is also referred to as feigned behaviour or a sham (Tunis & Rosnow, 1983). Synthetic behaviour is distinct and differs from socially desirable behaviours and impression management in this one key dimension. In the context of social desirability, a person actively engages in deception to gain a positive evaluation from another. This might include for instance a client in a CVE case managed program deferring to and agreeing with their case worker about their intervention goals to be seen in a more positive light, even though they do not consider these intervention goals as applicable and worthwhile. In a similar vein, impression management is a tactic used in veiling negative attributes to gain favour. Both behaviours utilise deception aimed at benefiting the deceiver (Tunis & Rosnow, 1983), and hence can be understood as forms of disguised compliance. However, the underlying intent is not malevolent. This is in direct contrast to what is generally understood as the intention of disguised compliance as it pertains to clients engaged in CVE interventions (Acheson & Paul, 2021). These conceptual issues draw attention to the importance of case managers and practitioners understanding intentions to deceive.

Characteristics of Disguised Compliance

One of the defining characteristics of disguised compliance is a discrepancy between an offender's outward behaviour and the underlying intention driving that behaviour. To be seen as a true case of disguised compliance, it is argued that this discrepancy must stem from a malevolent intention and potentially a premeditated act (Acheson & Paul, 2021). Hence it needs to be kept in mind that actions can superficially be deemed prosocial but are motivated by malevolent intent (Tunis & Rosnow, 1983). It is important to understand that intent can comprise features of truthfulness and deception and can be temporal (Clifford, 1983). That is there can be occasions where an individual's original thoughts and statements were sincere and truthful about personal change at the time, but which are called into question by future actions which betray those behaviours and words. However, it is important to note that the later contradictory actions do not necessarily mean the stated original intent was dishonest (Clifford, 1983). This is important to keep in mind if there are instances of regression or slippage back into extremist thinking and actions, in that this does not mean previous attempts to disengage were not sincere. This point draws attention to the importance of understanding the notion of deception.

Deception

Deception can be defined as a conscious and planned fabrication or creation of an illusion (Bowyer, 2003). Most studies in the field of deception research conceptualise deception as the act of communicating untruthful messages (Hess & Kleck, 2020). It can be aimed at gaining a benefit or preventing access to pertinent information about a true belief (Gupta & Ortony, 2019). It can include the establishment and maintenance of a false belief, or the prevention of true beliefs becoming known (Chisholm and Feehan 1977). Deceptive tactics aim to give the deceiver an advantage and if successful elicit a desired response from its target (Bowyer, 2003). For example, this could involve a CVE client lying about having ongoing contact with radicalised associates, by stating they are avoiding certain people and locations and are no longer engaging with previous associates around these places or events to receive a relaxation on restrictions to their movements. However, they continue to engage with these associates on-line. Hence deception aims to transform perceptions through one or more ruses (Bowyer, 2003).

Within the literature ruses can involve ambiguity, innovation, and mimicry, and include efforts to misdirect and distract (Bowyer, 2003). Mimicry involves a person transforming what is real (their extremist beliefs) into a false reality (professing ideological rejection or moderation) to keep something hidden (residual commitment to an extremist group). Innovation involves creating an illusion of an unexpected change (desire to disengage from extremist behaviour) by offering a novel adjustment (actively looking for work) to change a target's perceived reality (a case worker's) or disguise what is real. The tactic of ambiguity involves actions to confuse, (e.g., confuse a case worker who is aware of the possible motivate to deceive), by the deceiver suggesting other valid options and explanations to create distractions and confound the target of the deception. For example, when a CVE client states they happened to encounter another past radicalised associate in the community by accident, or happenstance, downplaying its significance when in fact the meeting was planned. For such deceptions to remain unnoticed, the ruse and the illusion being created must seamlessly fade into the existing pattern of behaviours (Bowyer, 2003). This requires constant vigilance on the part of the deceiver to ensure the desired reality is maintained (Bowyer, 2003). Hence, deception is a conscious process and is an implicit feature of criminal behaviour. It is typically a mechanism for creating trust and leveraging that trust for personal advantage. The use of deception and deceptive tactics by some convicted terrorists is not all that surprising give many can have non-ideologically motivated criminal histories where deception was used in gaining a tactical advantage (Acheson & Paul, 2019).

Lying is one such universal means of achieving deception (Bowyer, 2003). The purpose of the lie is having the ruse accepted as perceived truth. However, success may vary. Lies are a means of constructing and imposing a compelling fabrication to achieve an outcome which is often detrimental for the target and advantageous to the deceiver. For lies to have great effect they often need to be associated with other lies, something that can take effort to maintain. This is because depending on the level of acceptance and response from the target, the deceiver may need to construct further lies and ruses. The process to deceive will be adjusted by the changing needs of the deceiver themselves, a perceived change by the target (e.g., case worker), or even by the intrusion of information that calls into question the fabrication (Bowyer, 2003). In order to maintain the desired response, the deception process will need to be adapted, altered, and expanded (Bowyer, 2003).

Further complicating this analysis is that deception can arise from a desire for a person to present themselves in a socially desirable manner (Edwards, 1957). Research has tested different measures of deception and related deceptive behaviours (Boyle et al., 2018). People who score highly on socially desirable responding scales while demonstrating deceptive behaviour, may not be doing so for perverse purposes, with it simply motivated by a desire to belong and be viewed in a positive light (Holden & Fekken, 1989; Levashina & Campion, 2007). Also, judgements of what constitutes deception can vary across different professionals. For example, it has been pointed out that professionals in social and healthcare can draw a distinction between malicious deception, (deception undertaken for the purpose of veiling intentional harm) and benign deception (deception undertaken for the purpose of concealing information). However, professions in such areas as policing can see these types of deception as indistinguishable by being underpinned by the same intent (Fox, 2022). This highlights the importance of intention and demonstrates that deceptive behaviour alone is not sufficient for determining the presence of disguised compliance.

Intention

The notion of intention is an important issue to consider when understanding the characteristics of disguised compliance. Intention refers to a person's mental state preceding their corresponding action (Malle, Moses, & Baldwin, 2001). Intentions are primarily related to the person's own actions, typically come with a strong commitment to a particular decision and involve a certain level of planning (Schacter, Addis, & Bukner, 2008; Sooniste et al., 2017). Findings from research support the idea the criminally inclined individuals can often plan for

their malevolent intentions and these intentions need to be masked to evade detection (Clemens, Granhag, & Strömwall, 2013).

Deceptive intention is characterised as a person's predisposition towards engaging in deceptive acts. Although intending to deceive is not considered a deceptive act per se, intentions precede action and thus predict deceptive behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, Brown, & Carvajal, 2004). Previous research has found a significant relationship between the motivation to deceive and subsequent decisions to engage in deception (Masip, et al., 2016). However, it is important to note that mistakenly conveying false information does not constitute lying and thus does not fall under the notion of deceptive intent (Mahon, 2007). There is a psychosocial and developmental aspect to the formation of deceptive intention and the ability to intentionally deceive another person requires taking the perspective of the person the deceiver is engaging with, to ensure the deceptive behaviour matches expectations about what the other person believes constitutes truthful statements and behaviours (Gamer & Suchotzki, 2019). Consequently, determining an individual's intent and motivation for engaging in deceptive acts is crucial in assessing the seriousness and authenticity of an attempt to deceive (Masip et al., 2016).

Additional considerations about the origins and motivations for disguised compliance

Disguised compliance relies upon human interactions within a specific social context (Dennett, 1989). A professional will accord legitimacy to deceitful behaviours when they judge them (incorrectly) as truthful and authentic, for example as evidence of client change. These judgements though will be shaped by the norms and expectations applicable to the social context in which the behaviours arise (Geller, et al 1991). This could include norms and expectations amongst staff and case workers about valid therapeutic practices to engage clients in a CVE program and what constitutes authentic demonstrations of change.

There can be structural reasons why disguised compliance may arise. When an individual is compelled to do something which they do not want to do, disguised compliance maybe one response. The presentation of compliance prevents an individual from being subject to punishments and repercussions reserved for non-compliance (Fischer, Roberts, & Kirst, 2002). The appearance of compliance offers an individual a way of resolving the cognitive dissonance between what is expected of them and their true beliefs and desired course of action. Resistance can also constitute symbolic non-confrontational expressions (Al-Jabassini, 2017). Although acts of resistance can be observed, the underlying motivations can be overlooked and

improperly defined as more malevolent than what they are. This points to the importance of understanding intent, rather than simply focusing on the outward behaviour.

Individual reasons for disguised compliance can also relate to cognitive impairment and mental health issues, which leads people to react to certain forms of engagements in particular ways. The literature on false confessions has long shown how mentally unwell individuals and juveniles can react to suggestion and certain interrogation techniques confessing something as true when it is not (Kassin, 2014). The risk of admitting something that is false increases with certain tactics (e.g., lengthy isolation, false statements about existing evidence, and minimisation tactics that imply leniency) (Kassin, 2014). Hence this points to the importance of considering the consequence of certain forms of engagement, and intervention conditions, that may have the unintended consequence of increasing forms of disguised compliance amongst certain groups who suffer from cognitive impairment.

Violence towards other groups can be driven by emotions, with the role of emotions having been long recognised as related to political violence (Matsumoto, Frank, & Hwang, 2015; Matsumoto, Hwang, & Frank, 2012; 2013). Emotions such as anger, contempt, and disgust can motivate action and prime behaviour (Ekman, 2003; Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989; Tomkins, 1963; Matsumoto, Frank, & Hwang, 2015; Matsumoto, Hwang, & Frank, 2012; 2013). It can lead to aggression and the formation of prejudice (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005; Halperin & Gross, 2011). In relation to disguised compliance, although the behaviour and language associated with genuine compliance can be mimicked, responses associated with emotion cannot be so easily faked. Thus, the presentation of disguised compliance can involve compliant behaviour and along with flashes of transient and fleeting indicators of anger, contempt, disgust, fear, and hatred (Matsumoto et al., 2015). Furthermore, politically motivated offenders can exhibit slippages in relation to expressions of contempt and disgust towards certain groups which may be the target of their hate (Ekman, 1999; 2003; Matsumoto et al., 2015) e.g., certain racial and ethnic groups in the case of white supremacist. Attempts to hide these emotions and present an entirely different emotional façade can potentially indicate the presence of disguised compliance (Acheson & Paul, 2021).

Indicators of disguised compliance

The above discussion indicates that disguised compliance has two primary components - deception and malicious intention. In the literature behaviours that are seen as indicative of deception are lying, manipulation, and role-playing.

Lying

One behaviour indicative of disguised compliance is lying (Acheson & Paul, 2021). Lying is defined as verbal dishonesty (Clifford, 1983). According to Frank (1996), what differentiates a lie from other forms of erroneous and inaccurate testimony, is the intentional presentation of information that one knows to be untrue. As indicated above lying requires the person to constantly keep the perspective of the to-be-deceived person in mind, and to be attuned to any changes between the lie and the truth (Gamer & Suchotzki, 2019). Lying is defined as a deliberate attempt, whether successful or not, to create a belief in another person which the speaker considers to be false (Vrij, 2008). Central to this definition is the clearly articulated intention to deceive another.

The research indicates that there are differences between the detail and level of information people provide when lying compared to when telling the truth (Mac Giolla, Granhag, & Liu-Jönsson, 2013; Sooniste et al., 2013; Sooniste et al., 2016). For example, it has been identified that the answers of those lying contain comparatively more detailed articulations related to stated intentions (DePaulo, 2019; Granhag, Clemens, & Strömwall, 2009; Sooniste et al., 2016). In other words, they can over elaborate.

A review by Vrij, Granhag, & Porter, (2010) found that effective lying is cognitively demanding and requires mental effort. It requires attention to detail, consistency, monitoring the reactions of the other person and controlling one's own behavioural reactions. The more complex the lie the greater the cognitive load it imposes (Walczyk et al., 2014). Also, the literature supports the views that certain individuals can be more prone to lying and are more skilled in successfully deceiving others (DePaulo, 2019). For example, certain personality traits related to psychopathy (interpersonal antagonism, callous social attitudes, and impulsiveness) narcissism (superiority, entitlement, and dominance), Machiavellianism and extroversion have been found to have a relationship with a willingness and motivation to lie (DePaulo, 2019).

Manipulation

Manipulation requires certain communication strategies to be effective. The most obvious form of manipulative communication can include statements that the speaker says are true but the implications of which are false. It can include responses to questions that involve partly true statements that aim to conceal other information and evasive answers where the person tries to suddenly change the subject. It can include exaggerations and ambiguous statements and even include perceived truthful statements in the hope the other person believes them to be false (Gupta & Ortony, 2019).

Research has examined the behavioural markers of manipulation (e.g., Ekman & Friesen, 1969, 1972; Goldman-Eisler, 1968; Hess and Kleck, 2020; Mehrabian, 1971; Zuckerman, DePaulo, and Rosenthal 1981; Kahneman, 1973). There can be physical signs when people attempt to manipulate others such as arousal, and other cues like avoiding eye contact (Hess & Kleck, 2020; Lykken, 1979; Mehrabian, 1971). One such example of relevant to the issue of disguised compliance is that of over-exaggeration. Given the precursor for, and context of, engagements between a client and case worker in a CVE intervention and expectations about client change, a client can try too hard to appear a certain way and over-exaggerate behaviours which are thought to be important to the other person i.e., the case manager (Ekman & Friesen, 1969).

Role-playing

One tactic which may indicate that someone is playing a role rather than offering a genuine representation of themselves is the repeated and consistent (overt) taking of responsibility (Woody & Forrest, 2020). This is particularly relevant to the criminal justice system, where offenders know that correctional authorities (e.g., parole boards) can often look more favourably upon inmates who demonstrate remorse and accountability. Thus, offenders are aware that playing the role of a remorseful and reformed prisoner can potentially aid them in securing parole regardless of whether the remorse is feigned or genuine. The ability to successfully play a role depends on the offender's knowledge of the institutional practices and the decision-making process (Woody & Forrest, 2020). For example, in the area of child welfare certain tactics used by parents to deceive professionals can vary across different agencies based on what is perceived as tolerable within various professional contexts and what might be overlooked or ignored by certain staff. That is people can adapt deceptive tactics to suit their intended audience, while making a rational determination about what is permissible (Ferguson, 2011; Fox, 2022). This adaption to the environment and the audience is indicative of role-playing behaviour.

Ambiguity surrounding indicators of disguised compliance and its consequences

The most important limitation within the current body of literature is the ambiguity surrounding the term deception and a lack of distinction between the concepts of disguised compliance, genuine cooperation, and engagement (Brandon et al., 2009; Dumbrill, 2006; Yatchmenoff, 2008). This ambiguity creates significant challenges for accurately identifying, detecting, and discerning the presence of disguised compliance considering the possibility of behaviours being motivated by social desirability and other forms of behaviour which have similar

indicators (Hart, 2017). Such limitations have been consistently highlighted in the child welfare literature (Fox, 2022).

One such example is the noted consequences of introducing diagnostic criteria (Hart, 2017) as way of detecting behaviours as deceptive. In the child welfare literature, it has been pointed out that deception may arise amongst parents as a way to avoid confrontation. The uncritical interpretation of behaviours as an indicator of disguised compliance due to their position on a diagnostic criterion can lead to a host of unintended consequences (Fox, 2022; Leigh, Beddoe & Keddell, 2020). This can include for example the inappropriate assumption of malicious intent. This literature highlights that a professional's interpretation and response to potential and known cases of deception are mediated by their own understanding and knowledge of markers of deception and manipulation (Fox, 2022). This can comprise tacit forms of knowledge gained from experience. The problem though is this knowledge can impair objectivity. The consequence can be a failure to interpret deception or incorrectly interpret the intention underlying the exhibited behaviours.

It has already been noted that behaviours which are indicative of disguised compliance can also be the outcome of mental illness, cognitive limitations, or neurodevelopmental disorder (Woody & Forrest, 2020). Behaviours such as avoiding eye contact with others, lapses in concentration, restlessness, as well as having difficulty interpreting non-verbal behaviour and expressing emotion can be misinterpreted as indicators of deception (Woody & Forrest, 2020). This is particularly important when it comes to interventions involving youth.

Risk management and reintegration

Risk assessment and risk management

Different types of violent extremist risk assessment tools have been developed and are utilised in various contexts (Lloyd, 2019; Lloyd & Dean, 2015; Pressman & Flockton, 2012; Van der Heide, et al., 2019). While specific metrics pertaining to authenticity and deception are absent in these tools, they do largely rely upon structured professional judgement (SPJ) in order to draw conclusions about the presence of certain risks and in the formulation of case plans or resulting recommendations and judgements about risk (Lloyd, 2019; Lloyd & Dean, 2015). SPJ requires a risk assessor to take account of a variety of information and which includes judgements about the authenticity of information provided in the context of a clinical interview with an individual subject to an assessment. Research does point to the influence of bias and professional heuristics in shaping risk assessment and SPJ, which can lead to errors in clinical

judgements and intervention design (De Bortoli, et al., 2017; Eckhouse, et al., 2019). As mentioned previously similar factors can influence assumptions and judgements about the risk and presence of disguised compliance and whether forms of deception are occurring. Hence professional judgements about the presence of disguised compliance can have a potential bearing on the application of risk assessment tools.

The role of informed voluntary consent is crucial in the arena of rehabilitation and ultimately, meaningful change. While this principle holds true for any type of behavioural treatment program, it is perhaps most pertinent when dealing with offenders (Teasdale, 1979). Research has illustrated that treatment program success is dependent on the active and thus voluntary collaboration between the client and provider. The success of most programs depends on a client's willingness to participate and engage with the tasks and consequently implement the tools they are given. As result, it is extremely difficult for mandated programs which forgo voluntary consent to achieve any lasting change in offender populations (Fischer et al., 2002; Orban, 2022; Teasdale, 1979). It is argued for instance that mandated treatment can create an environment that attaches potentially detrimental consequences to any form of resistance and thus potentially fosters disguised compliance by rewarding the presentation of obedience (Al-Jabassini, 2017). Hence the risk of disguised compliance can increase with the level of perceived coercion a person may believe they are under to participate in a program.

The focus of this review has so far has been to understand the definitional and conceptual boundaries of disguised compliance, what features it incorporates and why it occurs. If there are certain factors that increase the risk of disguised compliance, what might help achieve the opposite, i.e., sincere, and authentic compliance to a program. The issue of detecting disguised compliance will be reviewed below. Here though the issue is not about detection, but processes that facilitate sincere engagement in an intervention. These will help improve program outcomes, by minimising the risk of disguised compliance and thus improving reintegration outcomes for extremist offenders.

Previous research has demonstrated that rapport building is essential in the context of CVE interventions and has several positive effects (Cherney, 2022; Cherney et al., 2022; Orban, 2022). Rapport can be defined as a smooth, positive interpersonal interaction, and can help increase the amount of information elicited during conversations, increase the level of trust between client and practitioner, engender cooperation, and facilitate agreement during negotiations (Abbe & Brandon, 2014). It should be noted that building rapport comes with its own set of vulnerabilities in terms of risk management (Revell & Burton, 2016). One being that it can create a highly exclusive relationship between an intervention client and a

practitioner, which can lead the latter to become captured by the perspective and views of a client and open to possible manipulation.

The term compliance refers to adhering to a rule, demand, request or agreement, of which can all be present in the context of CVE interventions. Research from behavioural sciences on nudge theory and regulation provides insight into facilitating genuine compliance (Peters & Robb, 2017) and thus suggests how the risk of disguised compliance might be minimised. In essence disguised compliance is a form of non-compliance, in that the former is occurring through actions and behaviours that aim to generate the veneer of compliance. The behavioural science research indicates that providing easy access to services can increase compliance; monitoring and feedback mechanisms can reduce unwanted behaviour such as non-compliance; personalising contact can have a positive impact on compliance, allowing people to have a say (voice) in the process that affects them can increase levels of compliance; increasing the uncertainty of reviews into an individual's behaviour can improve compliance and threats and the application of punishment can decrease levels of compliance (Haynes, et al 2013; Peters & Robb, 2017).

Detection of disguised compliance

Overall, people are not very efficient lie detectors. Multiple studies demonstrate that most people lack the ability to accurately interpret deception cues and fail to recognise when they are being deceived (Bond & DePaulo 2006; DePaulo et al., 2003; Hauch, et al., 2016; Shaw, Porter, & Ten Brinke, 2013; Sporer & Schwandt, 2007; Vrij, 2008). Even professionals working in deception detection roles only have slightly better odds than equal chance in detecting deception and consequently, disguised compliance (Acheson & Paul, 2021; Bond & DePaulo, 2006; Fox, 2022; Shaw, Porter, & Ten Brinke, 2013). Studies have found that child safety practitioners and police officers typically struggle with discerning between the veracity of truthful and deceptive statements and different forms of compliance (Bond & DePaulo, 2006; Shaw, Porter, & Ten Brinke, 2013; Fox, 2022; Yatchmenoff 2008).

Some scholars have argued that professionals' consistently limited ability to detect deception can be explained by a reliance on inaccurate beliefs about what constitutes deception (Acheson & Paul, 2021; Gladwell, 2019; Woody & Forrest, 2020). Performance in deception detection is thought to be primarily influenced by human biases. There can be a tendency for people to over attribute certain individual characteristics as leading to deception while ignoring how the external environment might be influencing its occurrence (Gladwell, 2019; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Costanzo & Leo, 2007; Kassin, 2008).

Methods and Techniques of Detection

A significant amount of research has been conducted in relation to the effects of training for deception detection. One meta-analysis demonstrated that at best only small or medium improvements in the ability to detect deception after receiving training (Hauch, et al, 2016). Of relevance is the finding that training programs which offer instruction on the verbal cues of deception appear to be more effective for detecting deception than those programs which offer training in non-verbal cues. Furthermore, methods such as the verifiable detail technique (Nahari, Vrij, & Fischer, 2012) and a strategic questionnaire approach (Vrij, et al., 2011) have been found to be effective in enhancing law enforcement practitioners' deception detection accuracy (see table 1 in Appendix).

A raft of possible techniques for detecting deception have been proposed. Table 1 in the Appendix outlines these techniques and the existing evidence on their effectiveness. Some of the techniques are less relevant to the CVE space, but one that is utilised in the U.K. with terrorist offenders is the use of polygraphs (see results from the SME interviews). When considering the different techniques listed in Table 1, one must keep in mind a range of limitations that plague these methods.

One issue which plagues all the deception detection methods and techniques are biases related to cultural stereotypes. Misconceptions about behaviour and perceptions of deception ultimately lead to the misinterpretation of behavioural indicators (Fox, 2022). This issue becomes particularly relevant when considering the accuracy and reliability of deception detection when dealing with individuals belonging to cultural and racial minorities (Woody & Forrest, 2020). This inevitable convergence of biases, misconceptions, and misinterpretations in conjunction with an over-reliance on inflated perceptions of deception detection accuracy can result in errors of judgment. This can lead to contrary (and relevant) evidence being discounted. This form of tunnel vision shapes responses and influences the interpretation of behaviour (Woody & Forrest, 2020).

As noted previously professionals will have different understandings of deception and disguised compliance that is informed by their respective organisational and personal ethos (Fox, 2022). The deception detection ability of individual practitioners has been found to be linked to their perceptions and views of deception itself. Furthermore, even if professionals are conscious of the most common forms of deception tactics, often they are only able to recognise these tactics with the benefit of hindsight (Fox, 2022). The task of recognising disguised compliance as it is occurring only becomes more complicated for CVE practitioners who are

attempting to balance the competing priorities of risk management with maintaining rapport with their client (Acheson & Paul, 2021).

Another limitation which affects detection methods and techniques is that most behavioural indicators and cues of deception have been developed and evaluated on non-offender populations (Teasdale, 1979). For the issue of disguised compliance in the CVE area, this presents an additional challenge as there is limited information about the antecedents and presentation of disguised compliance (Acheson & Paul, 2021 – see SME results for various examples). Lastly, one aspect which is particularly relevant for the detection of disguised compliance in the terrorist context is the growing counter-intelligence capabilities of extremist organisations (Sooniste, Granhag, & Strömwall, 2017). Extremist organisations, like al-Qaeda, can provide members with detailed instructions on how to behave during interrogations to avoid suspicion. Hence it is argued that knowledge about the types and forms of counter-interrogation strategies likely to be encountered when engaging terrorist offenders will help in identifying possible cases of disguised compliance (Acheson & Paul, 2022)

Part 2: Case studies

As mentioned, three cases are reviewed in this report. These are the cases of Fejzulai, K. (Austria), Abdullah, A. (Germany) and Khan, U. (United Kingdom).

Fejzulai, K (Austria)

Fejzulai, K. was born on June 24, 2000 in Austria. His parents were from Macedonia, and he attended elementary and middle school. It is reported there were problems at home which included violence. Fejzulai attended a higher education technical college for a short period of time, but then dropped out and worked in unskilled employment and became unemployed. Along with another acquaintance, Fejzulai began to attend a mosque that was frequented by radical Islamists and during this time he became more interested in the ideology of the Islamic State (IS). Fejzulai contacted IS fighters in Syria and Iraq via social media and in 2018 attempted to join IS, travelling to Turkey where he was arrested and deported back to Austria. In 2019 he was sentenced to 22 months in prison. However, he was released early, on the condition he would participate in a deradicalisation program and be subject to monitoring by the probation service. On November 2020, he shot 4 people and injured 23 individuals in central Vienna before being killed by police (Counter Extremism Project, N.Da; Neuhold 2020; Nikbakhsh & Meinhart 2020; Oltermann, Connolly & Burke, 2020).

It is asserted that Fejzulai deceived his mentors that he had renounced his radical beliefs (Oltermann, Connolly & Burke, 2020). Prior to his release from prison, it is reported he had modified his strict Islamic practices and dress and wanted to re-engage in his technical degree. He was seen by staff of the program “Deradicalisation Association” (i.e., intervention provider) every two weeks. He was reported as punctual and that there had been some moderation in his beliefs about the rule of law and democracy. Fejzulai moved out of home, and with the assistance of the probation service found an apartment. He was noted as compliant by his probation supervisor, fulfilled all his agreements, completed workshops, and job applications. Prior to the attack it is reported that Fejzulai talked about an interest in joining the army – but voiced concerns about having to fight Muslims in the event of a conflict – and rejected recent terrorist attacks in France. He was also to be registered in a workshop on mechanical engineering (Hoisl 2020; Nikbakhsh & Meinhart 2020; Vienna ORF.at, 2020).

Given Fejzulai’s terrorist attacks it would appear some level of deception was occurring in his engagements with agencies, and that he had deceived staff about his deradicalisation despite behaviours that indicated pro-social change. Reporting does indicate there were perhaps early signs about Fejzulai’s lack of authenticity to disengage. For example, in 2020 he made a failed attempt to buy ammunitions in Slovakia. Slovakian authorities alerted Austrian officials regarding Fejzulai’s attempts to procure ammunition (Counter Extremism Project, N.Da). Following his release, Fejzulai returned to his former social environment and re-engaged in strict Islamic practises and dress. While mentioning some moderation in his beliefs, the Deradicalisation Association noted that he continued to possess a naïve and rudimentary understanding of the Islamic religion. While Fejzulai was reported as compliant his overall level of engagement with deradicalisation staff was cited as impassive and unemotional. There was some evidence he was engaging radical content online. It was reported by the staff of the Deradicalisation Association that they lacked the necessary resources to engage a client like Fejzulai (Hoisl 2020; Vienna ORF.at, 2020).

Abdullah A (Germany)

Abudulla, A. is a 20-year-old Syrian when he stabbed a gay couple (both tourists), killing one of them, in Dresden, Germany in October 2020. He was found guilty of murder in May 2021. It is reported the attack was motivated by a hatred of LBGTQI+ people, fuelled by his Islamist ideology (Milton 2021). Abdullah was a Syrian refugee who escaped the war and entered Germany in 2015. He had a criminal history and drew the attention of authorities and was classified by police as a terrorist threat. In 2018 he was convicted for terrorism offences relating

to recruiting members for IS and obtaining instructions for the commission of a terrorist offence. This involved searching online for instructions on how to build an explosive device, which it was asserted he planned to detonate at a film festival. He also assaulted a law enforcement officer. He was required to serve a juvenile sentence for two years and nine months (Brandau, 2020; Breyton, 2020; Hardenberg, 2020; Milton 2021; Reinhard, 2020; Zeit Online, 2020).

During his time in prison Abdullah was visited by staff from the Violence Prevention Network (VPN), an NGO heavily involved in counter radicalisation interventions across various Federal States in Germany. VPN staff engaged Abdullah in ten counselling sessions when in prison. While initially unwilling to engage staff, it was reported that Abdullah was open to being ideologically challenged and discussing other points of view. Once released from prison Abdullah was subject to supervision and a range of conditions relating to owning weapons, internet enabling devices, and restrictions on his associations. He was allocated a probation officer and was required to report to a police station. He was also provided housing for asylum seekers in Dresden. After undertaking the attack and prior to his arrest, Abdullah was engaged by staff from VPN. During this time, VPN staff were unaware of his violent act. After the attacks Abdullah reported to VPN staff that engagements with him could begin. He met with two VPN staff near the police station he was required to report to, and they also took a walk that was close to the crime scene. He was reported as calm and relaxed during this meeting. Another three engagements with VPN staff occurred prior to his arrest and it would appear he was also being monitored by police during this time. The director of the VPN reported they had never experienced a case like Abdullah and that there were no behaviours or actions that alarmed them or indicated he had committed the knife attack (Brandau, 2020; Breyton, 2020; Hardenberg, 2020; Reinhard, 2020; Zeit Online, 2020).

The incident raised questions about the effectiveness of deradicalisation initiatives in Germany, particularly those delivered by NGOs (Haneke, 2020; Reinhard, 2020). It has been commented on that the plethora of agencies involved in counter radicalisation is best described as an industry in Germany, with questions raised about the effectiveness of various initiatives, the professional background and training of staff and the transparency of the work that is undertaken by NGOs (Koehler, 2021). The managing director of VPN reported that if there are no outwards signs of concerning behaviours there is little staff can do and that staff need to continue to engage clients. He stated that staff try to observe for outwards signs of deception such as repeated statements or avoiding eye contact (Brandau, 2020; Reinhard, 2020).

Khan U (United Kingdom)

Usman Khan was a 28-year-old, who had been sentenced to 16 years for involvement in a failed terrorist plot targeting the London Stoke Exchange. He pled guilty to several of his charges and was sentenced in 2012. He was released early in 2018 after only serving part of his sentence. Khan was an associate of several known U.K. extremists, including those that publicly supported ISIS propaganda (e.g., Anjem Choudary). He was also a member of several radical groups and consumed online video and lectures by al-Qaeda's Anwar al-Awlaki. He had a history of violence as a teenager (Casciani, 2019; Counter Extremism Project, N.Db ; H.M. Coroner, 2022).

When in prison Khan was assessed as a high-risk prisoner and a risk assessment judged him as likely to become involved in extremist activity when released. While in prison Khan participated in the Healthy Identity Intervention that targets convicted extremists (Dean et al., 2018). He also began to participate in the Learning Together program, an educational intervention supported by academics from the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge University. When released Khan was managed under the statutory Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)¹ and was subject to strict licencing conditions overseen by an offender manager in the U.K. National Probation Service.² Khan also was provided support under the Home Office Desistance and Disengagement Programme (DDP) (Home Office, 2019), that case managers convicted terrorists and provides supports such as mentoring. Following his release, it was reported that Khan was compliant with his licence conditions, visited his family, did not engage with any previous associates, and unsuccessfully applied for several jobs. His curfew conditions were progressively relaxed. He also remained in contact with the Learning Together initiative and attended Learning Together events and was provided a non-networked computer. He was invited to a Learning Together anniversary and alumni event to take place in November 2019 at Fishmongers Hall. There was no evidence MAPPA agencies objected to him attending this event. On November 29, he attended the event alone and wearing a fake suicide vest he stabbed and killed two attendees and injured others. Khan made his way outside to London Bridge and was shot dead by police (Counter Extremism Project, N.Db ; H.M. Coroner, 2022).

The Khan case led to an immediate government review of convicted terrorists who had received early release and instigated legislative changes. It raised questions about the

¹ For a description and information on MAPPA's see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa-guidance>.

² For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service>

effectiveness of programs like Healthy Identity and the DDP, and led to concerns being raised by politicians, the media, police, academics, and various government agencies about the occurrence of disguised compliance and the residual risks convicted terrorists can present (BBC News 2019; Casciani, 2019; Warrell, 2019). A coronial inquest into the Khan attack was completed.

Given Khan's participation in several programs, his level of monitoring and supervision and then the attacks he carried out, the issue of him deceiving agencies and gaming the system were raised. In the aftermath of the attack, it is difficult to know the degree of his deception and whether he had such intent all along prior to and when released. The subsequent media reporting and the coronial inquest did draw attention to several issues and gaps in Khan's management, monitoring and supervision.

It is reported that Khan's DDP mentoring was suddenly ceased, and that this made it hard for him to look for work. Around this time, he also stopped engaging in other activities like attending a gym and became socially isolated. It is unclear if this contributed to his motivation to carry out an attack, but it was noted by the Coronial inquest that this disruption was a problem due to its impact on Khan and opportunities to engage him (H.M. Coroner, 2022). One former Scotland Yard officer who mentored Khan during his participation in the DDP stated he had a "suspiciously rehearsed persona" and reported he witnessed Khan losing his temper during a meeting with him, and was angry about his licence conditions (Kerbaj, 2019). PREVENT³ officers responsible for monitoring Khan had no training in dealing with a terrorist offender and when they visited Khan reported that he became agitated. There was a lack of information sharing between agencies involved in managing Khan and flaws and gaps in the risk assessments that were carried out. A risk assessment using an ERG 22+ that was conducted by a forensic psychologist when in prison, assessed him as high risk, but another ERG 22+ carried out by a probation officer suggested his risk could be downgraded, but this was a lot less detailed due to a lack of access to relevant information. There was also a lack of record keeping by various agencies and bodies around decisions that were made to allow Khan to engage in certain activities (H.M. Coroner, 2022).

There was also evidence about the sincerity of Khan's engagements. For example, Khan's participation in the Learning Together program was seen as having a positive influence on him by his probation officer. However, while participating in Learning Together, Khan

³ For more information on the U.K. PREVENT program see <https://www.counterterrorism.police.uk/what-we-do/prevent/>. Also see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revised-prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales>.

never did any of the work required of him and had very sporadic contact with the organisation. His probation officer was unaware of this. There were also numerous indications that Khan was being deceptive in his engagements with probation officers (H.M. Coroner, 2022). There were clear incongruences between what he told officers about his arrest and behaviours in prison. He minimised his behaviours and lied about standing up to extremists in prison, when in fact he was a leading radicalising influence on other inmates. These discrepancies were seen as unimportant, and insufficient regard was given to such instances of dishonesty. It was concluded by the coronial inquest that there was too much of an emphasis placed on passive compliance and Khan's self-presentation when it came to his supervision and engagement. A key recommendation made was for training to be provided to probation officers on the risks of deceptive behaviours and those associated with managing and assessing extremist offenders based on indicators of compliance (e.g., adherence to licence conditions, polite behaviours, and professed statements about self-change) (H.M. Coroner, 2022).

Part 3: Subject Matter Expert Interviews

In this section the results from the SMEs are presented. SMEs comprised 24 participants, from Australia (N = 8), Germany (N = 12), the United Kingdom (N = 2) and Indonesia (N=2). All had direct involvement in the delivery of CVE interventions in the community and correctional context. The interviews with practitioners occurred over Zoom or Microsoft teams and ranged from 30-45 minutes in duration. Nine written replies to our questions were received from German practitioners, in addition to three in person interviews. Questions for our sample focused on the following topics:

1. How do you define disguised compliance and understand it as a problem?
2. How prolific do you think it is as a problem in the area of CVE programs?
3. In your experience how do individuals try to deceive staff about their deradicalisation?
4. What sort of behaviours do you look out for to try and detect disguised compliance?
5. What types of strategies can be used to detect and minimize risks arising from disguised compliance?
6. What is the relationship between disguised compliance and risk assessment?

There is not the space here to provide full verbatim quotes across all respondents, instead a summary of key points raised by interviewees in response to each question is provided, with illustrative quotes used to contextualise specific findings with examples. The data was thematically coded in relation to the above research questions.

Definitions of disguised compliance

Amongst the SMEs disguised compliance was generally understood as an attempt to deceive intervention staff, through behaviours that aim to display the pretence of deradicalisation when in fact the person is “*foxing the system*” (UK SME 1). However, the issue of intention was raised as an important consideration in defining disguised compliance, because it was emphasised by several SMEs (12 participants) that disguised compliance does not mean “*someone wants to engage in a violent act*” (UK SME 1). For example, one SME from the U.K. made the point that the behaviour of social desirability presents a potential challenge to disguised compliance as a concept, in which people respond in ways that are underpinned by a desire to be seen favourably, which is a normal human condition. This practitioner stated that the difference between disguised compliance and social desirability is that of intentionality. Several other SMEs made the similar point, that client deception may not have malicious intent and any working definition of disguised compliance must take this into account (UK SME 2).

The SMEs also stated that at a practical level there is high level of subjectivity when it comes to the concept of disguised compliance and what it may represent. For example, an Australian CVE practitioner stated that disguised compliance can reflect a client’s level of contemplation about participation in a program and stage of change. Another SME stated that intention can be driven by a client’s suspicion towards an intervention and its staff, and their personal vulnerabilities. For example, some clients with cognitive vulnerabilities and psychosocial deficits have a great desire to please their case managers and can be very good at formulating a plan, but never follow through on those plans. Here there is no intention to deceive, the behaviour is not malicious, it is simply the result of a lack of ability (Aust SME 11).

It was also described that there can be differences across agencies as to what constitutes disguised compliance. SME 10 noted this can be the result of disagreements amongst multi-agency partners and multi-disciplinary teams of staff about what is indicative of actual client change (Aust SME 10). This SME emphasised that certain disciplines view compliance as change, while others do not and that this leads to discrepancies in expectations about progress and trajectories, and conflict in the shared understanding amongst staff of what is required from a client.

Disguised compliance as a problem

The overwhelming majority of SMEs stated that disguised compliance is not a significant problem in their experience, and that there existed a lot of “hype” surrounding its presence

amongst CVE clients and convicted terrorists. However, no SME ruled it out as a potential risk and SMEs from Australia stated they often see “clumsy, unskilled attempts to deceive”. It was seen as more of a problem in the adult space compared to interventions involving juveniles or adolescences, where it was emphasised that the cognitive development of young clients means that the type of sophisticated thinking that aims to sustain consistent feigning during client/staff interactions, without detection, is beyond the capability of most young people (Aust SME 5). SMEs from Germany emphasised that the detection of disguised compliance and deception is a role for the police, not for service providers or counselling services.

One Australian CVE practitioner made the point that the debate surrounding disguised compliance risked branding CVE clients as a fundamentally different cohort, who lie more than other types of offenders (e.g., sex offenders, violent offenders). The debate about the risk of disguised compliance created the flawed expectations that CVE clients ought to be open without any onus upon the system, and how that might be influencing their behaviour (Aust SME 11). This was an important consideration in the Australian context as it relates to various legislative provisions pertaining to control orders, ongoing detention, and extended supervision (e.g., HRTO & THRO)⁴. As mentioned by several participants, a problem is that some CVE clients can be advised by their legal counsel and theological supports to be wary about CVE units because of the lack of transparency about programs they are approached to engage in.

All participants made the point that disguised compliance was less of a problem in the context of voluntary programs and that if participation was mandated it would increase the risk of disguised compliance occurring. However, even in the context of voluntary participation, one SME stated that there can be a misunderstanding about voluntariness and the perceived consequences of withdrawing, which can lead to deception, even if participants can always leave if they no longer want to participate in an intervention (UK SME 1).

All SMEs reiterated the point that variation in the risk of disguised compliance can differ by context and the person, and that this needs to be considered in assessments of its prevalence. It can vary depending on the radicalised person and their adopted role of a leader or follower and the degree of radicalisation and immersion in a violent extremist group or scene. In the prison context it was identified as more of a risk, in which radicalised prisoners might force other inmates to deceive prison staff. The two Indonesian SMEs – both who

⁴ The High-Risk Terrorist Offender (HRTO) legislation is Commonwealth legislation that allows for the ongoing detention of convicted terrorists beyond their release date. The Terrorist (High Risk Offender) – THRO - legislation is a New South Wales scheme, allows for post-sentence supervision and detention of offenders deemed as posing an unacceptable risk of committing serious terrorism offences (see Ripperger, 2021; Marsic 2018).

worked with terrorist inmates - made the point that in their experience terrorist prisoners who want to disengage may feel threatened by other terrorist prisoners and leaders, and hence respond with disguised compliance as a result (Indo SME 8 & 9). These same SMEs stated the problem of disguised compliance can vary between high and low risk prisoners, with it observed as less prevalent in low-risk prisoners because they want to cooperate with authorities. However, these two SMEs drew attention to the fact that disguised compliance as a tactic can be used simply out of a motivation to receive privileges, secure remissions, or family visits, or move to a less restrictive environment.

Just like the narratives around definitions of disguised compliance, the theme of motivation was emphasised in discussions around the seriousness of disguised compliance as a problem. SMEs stated that agencies and authorities must understand why it might be occurring. It could be the outcome of personality traits or learned behaviour, so clients may not even be aware it will be looked upon by intervention staff as having possible malicious intent. It can be the outcome of defensiveness towards staff or a CVE intervention more broadly. In some circumstances it was stated that for Islamists it can be theologically permissible to lie to authorities. A sense of loyalty to leaders and family members can be a motivating factor. Clients may be told by associates or leaders to lie to intervention staff. The residual effect of extremist beliefs and connections can be a motivating factor that is linked to an ongoing sense of belonging to the community and sub-culture, a residual influence cited as applicable to right-wing extremists (Aust SME 7; UK SME 1).

Several SMEs made the point that any assessment of the problem of disguised compliance needed to be calibrated with an acceptance of, and level of comfort with, the idea that that rehabilitation of an extremist often includes setbacks and reversions to previous behaviours or thought processes. This does not mean such individuals are unredeemable but requires program staff - and legal authorities like the police - to be accepting of where a client finds themselves without judging them as behaving in a malicious way (Aust SME 3 & 11). SME 3 made the point that deception alone should not be a sole concern if an individual is still engaging in a program, and that the risk of deception is simply part of the nature of intervening in the lives of individuals who are in need. The point was made that compliance in a program might still involve an individual having some type of residual contact with past radicalised associates or engagement with extremist content, but they may not resort to or support the use of violence. In this context compliance with therapeutic supports is still important and is a better way of managing extremists by aiming to crowd out compulsions to act violently. This SME stated that by framing disguised compliance in this manner, program staff can have a

framework for holding a dissonant position between being optimistic about client change, while also still having some suspicions of a client's sincerity to reform (Aust SME 3).

Behaviours indicative of disguised compliance

Participants were asked for specific behaviours that in their experience are indicative of disguised compliance. This was raised in the context of regular engagements with radicalised individuals relating to intervention plans, compared to broader strategies used to test authenticity and detect deception. These strategies are canvassed in the next section. However, there was overlap in the answers given to questions about indicators of disguised compliance and its detection.

Before canvassing these behavioural indicators, participants emphasised that there needed to be some caution in stipulating or outlining certain examples, because it does not mean they universally apply across all cohorts. Also, while some behaviours might indicate deception or lying, it does not mean they are motivated by attempts to seek advantage or have malicious intent. For example, one SME stated that any indicators of disguised compliance can become murky when dealing with clients who are on the spectrum (e.g., autistic), have mental health issues or other types of personal vulnerabilities and that meaningful engagements, while always mindful of authenticity, do not involve simply determining if someone is lying about change and commitment (Aust SME 11). Clients can also display indicators of disguised compliance that are aimed at testing out what agencies and intervention staff know about them and their offending behaviour (German SME 4). For example, one German CVE practitioner stated that clients can set out to explore the level of cooperation that service providers have with security agencies, by testing how much these agencies know about a client, which can include statements like "*I don't know what the police want from me, I haven't done anything*" (Germany SME 4). This can be interpreted as a form of deception but can arise from a motivation to set the parameters of dialogue and discussion with a case worker or counsellor, which will gradually evolve overtime where the deceptive conduct becomes a secondary issue to the more important goal of achieving openness and candour.

Another point made by participants was that while certain indicators might create suspicion about the authenticity of a client, any incidents - such as those outlined below - require further investigation and probing. Their occurrence must be considered across a spectrum of behaviours based on an assessment of their level of seriousness according to a client's need, length of involvement in an intervention and extremist risk. Examples cited as

potential indicators of disguised compliance and which can raise suspicion about the authenticity of client engagements and deradicalisation, included the following:

- Sudden professed claims by a client they have changed. As one SME described it – they claim they have experienced an “*epiphany*” or “*seen the light*” (UK SME 1) and no longer believe in the ideology. The authenticity of this must be questioned given disengagement is a gradual process (UK SME 1 & 2).
- Overly reactive responses to questions that are characterised by defensiveness and complaints about partners or certain activities and requests.
- Avoidance of conversing about topics and using responses that deflect, evade, or redirect discussion of certain issues. This may signal a desire to disguise a person’s true beliefs or intentions. This can include statements that over-elaborate or provide verbose rambling responses which can be aimed at diverting attention away for a person’s true beliefs. The two Indonesian SMEs stated that this is behaviour they see in terrorist prisoners who try to deceive staff about their deradicalisation, by becoming the centre of attention and “*talk to much*” to prison staff and other prisoners about how they have changed (Indo SME 1 & 2).
- A drop in the level of energy towards their intervention plan or levels of engagement with a counsellor, which sees a client shift from genuine inquiring behaviours to more robotic and formulaic engagements.
- A shift from being highly resistant to being overly cooperative. For example, one interviewee recalled an experience of a highly resistance client suddenly coming on board, after little willingness to engage (Aust SME 6). This made her question his genuineness and it turned out he was simply doing this to get funding for a technical course he was interested in. While the latter showed prosocial interests, the context of the history of the engagement raised questions about the sincerity and motivation behind the professed change in attitude and behaviours.
- Contradictory statements and inconsistencies between what clients are saying compared to what they are doing. This can include for example incongruences between what a client is saying to their case manager about a service and how much it is helping, compared to how they are actually engaging that service provider. It can also include statements about no longer engaging previous associates or frequenting certain locations when these engagements have shifted on-line. The latter can still occur in the context of adopting socially acceptable behaviours such as work and education.

- Answers and responses to questions about a person’s radicalisation and how they have changed that offer very little detail, with their resistance to elaborating on certain issues. This can include an unwillingness to answer complex probing questions that challenge a person’s thought process.
- Overlapping with the above point was the example of when a client will not engage in conversations about their beliefs and behaviours with a case manager while being compliant with every other stakeholder.
- Downplaying, white washing and watering down (i.e., minimisation – see below also) the seriousness of their offending behaviours or convictions for terrorism that indicate poor insights or an unwillingness to gain offence insights.
- Discrepancies in stakeholder feedback about a client’s level of engagement. One SME stated, “*these discrepancies can be minor, or discrepancies can be major*” (Aust SME 11). In cases of major discrepancies, it was stated that it is critical to understand to whom the client is lying and why the client is lying, with more discrepancies narrowing the parameters as to whether a client is being sincere and authentic.
- Several SMEs cited the example of when a client provides excuses which deflects and minimises any onus of responsibility or claims that events or occurrences were the outcome of bad luck or happenstance. This encompassed several types of behaviours such as excuses that becoming involved in an extremist cause or act was the result of a sense loyalty to a family member, or the outcome of cultural practices (i.e., denying responsibility). Minimisation and deferring to instances of happenstance were described as tactic of “*plausible deniability*” (Aust SME 4), that included excuses like “*I didn’t know I had to do that*”, when it came to an expectation or commitment that had been clearly explained, or “*it was an accident*” that they had contact with a previous radicalised associate or extremist group members. This latter occurrence was described in the following way by two SMEs: “*I was accidentally there is a big one...I was there, and these people suddenly turned up [previous associates or persons of interest to the police]. And it’s sort of like, well, why did you put yourself into that position?..Oh, you know, [they say] that’s where we all go to pray or that’s where we all go camping or hang out. I didn’t know they were coming*” (Aust SME 4). “*....we’ve had lots of times where people have been identified or found in cars, like when a car is being pulled over by the police, that they [CVE client] are in a car with somebody else that they’re not supposed to be with... And then there’s always an explanation. There’s always some....[excuse]... it was an accident* (Aust SME 10). The challenge with these occurrences is that while in some

instances a case manager might not be able to prove definitively a client is lying, the denial and minimization of the event should flag concerns that need to be kept in mind when assessments are made of a client's progress and authenticity of disengagement.

- Suspicions about a client can be raised when there is compliance, but there is open rejection of the program, and any recommendations, coupled with continued threats to withdraw.
- Ongoing difficulty in contacting participants (e.g., always reaching voicemails, communication is primarily via text messages), with a client repeatedly changing meeting arrangements.
- Playing off different partners where a client will attempt to generate tension or disagreements across stakeholders. This can include for example, complaining to a case manager about how they are being poorly treated by a service provider with the hope it undermines the case worker and service provider relationship. It can include lying and role playing in which a client feigns commitment to certain activities that are seen as important by one partner, while at the same time stating they cannot follow through because it would not be acceptable to other partners (e.g., police).
- Subtle changes in appearance that include re-adopting certain styles of clothing or body modifications (e.g., tattoos), associated with certain violent extremist groups such as white supremacists. While this might not constitute a deceptive act, it can indicate an incongruence between stated beliefs and motivations.
- A point made by both UK SMEs is that some individuals are naturally adept at deceiving staff, because of their own intelligence or other manipulative personality traits, and that this also makes them very good at deciphering what people want to hear. This can occur though CVE clients talking to others who have previously participated in an intervention. It can include the process of social learning, where a client, based on for example the responses of a case manager, shapes their behaviours that are then used to conceal the intention to deceive.

Strategies to detect and minimise the risks of disguise compliance

SMEs were questioned about the types of strategies that can be used to detect and manage the risk of disguised compliance. While some strategies suggested aim to test for incongruences in behaviours, statements and beliefs, others are about minimising the risk of disguised compliance from occurring or being overlooked in the context of case management and review. No one strategy was professed as more effective than another, with a combination of approaches advocated. Also, SMEs were at pains to emphasise that they do not go about

explicitly trying to “trip up” clients, but rather the approaches adopted are aimed at calibrating their assessments of authenticity. Some of the suggested strategies that were recommended and have been adopted include the following:

- Having two people manage a client so they can oversight each other’s work and the quality of engagements, and review evidence about the authenticity of client change.
- Having supervision measures in place for staff who are directly working with offenders and CVE clients. This provides oversight and for an independent and objective perspective to be encouraged.
- Debriefing after client engagements and case management review involving teams of staff so assumptions of case workers about client change can be tested. Several SMEs described how they use case conferences with staff to undertake what they termed “plausibility checking” about client progress. In these contexts, the benefit of having multi-disciplinary teams that bring different perspectives and views was cited as important. This allowed for various solutions to possible episodes of disguised compliance to be workshopped.
- Triangulating across different information sources was cited by all SMEs as essential. This included seeing how a client is engaging with other services and checking accounts they are providing with additional sources of information. To be effective this required a willingness of various stakeholders and agencies to share information.
- The importance of undertaking and documenting ongoing assessments on the quality of client engagement in an intervention was stressed as important. These can help inform judgements about the level of investment a client is making and whether it goes beyond superficial engagement. One SME stated that an important consideration is the level of disclosure by a client to a case manager or clinician, which can be used as a metric for honesty and deception, particular in the case of clients where there is a history of surface level responses. Ongoing superficial engagement and a lack of disclosure in conversations about extremism can act as “red flags” that a client is not being open and honest (Aust SME 11).
- Ensuring that what is being said during intervention sessions aligns with behaviour observed in other contexts (e.g., with other service providers, social media forums, in the prison wings, during telephone conversations) (UK SME 2). The two Indonesian SMEs made a similar point when stating that they observe how terrorist prisoners engage with prison officers, other terrorists, and non-terrorist inmates, and during visits with their wives and family members. If an offender is still radicalised, there can be a difference between

how they behave with prison staff compared to other terrorist inmates and family members, where they feel more open to express ongoing extremist beliefs.

- Intervention staff should never downplay client “slip ups” and episodes of re-engagement no matter how minor. It was cited as important to confront a client in such cases with evidence and assess how they react.
- It was recommended that case workers should “*never take first responses as gospel*” (Aust SME 10, UK SME 2), to a question posed to a client and should always challenge and probe responses.
- One strategy used by practitioners was to bring up similar questions across different sessions, and then compare the narratives presented by a client to identify any incongruences and variations in detail that might indicate inconsistencies in statements. This also comprised articulating the same question differently during intervention sessions, or to get relevant agencies to pose the same question in a different way to a client. This allows for answers to be compared and is a way in which the accuracy of statements can be tested. One SME emphasized that this provides an opportunity to understand why clients are presenting differently and address the issue. They stated that the intention behind this strategy is not to “set clients up”. It aims to find ways for clients to demonstrate that what they are saying is accurate. The primary aim is to create opportunities for consistencies and inconsistencies to arise naturally in the context of intervention sessions (Aust SME 10).
- Another suggested strategy was to engage family members to detect any possible deception or inconsistencies in client behaviours. Family members were identified by SMEs as providing insights into the day-to-day behaviour of clients and can corroborate the truthfulness of self-reporting. It was emphasised though that this should only occur in certain circumstances where family members are supportive of a client’s involvement or were not the source of their radicalisation. An additional benefit of this strategy is that family members are given a direct avenue for reporting small indicators of change or setbacks, while remaining in a supportive role.
- Two SMEs suggested that using questionnaires that test for specific personality types which have inbuilt scales for deception can be useful in flagging clients who tend to act deceptively (Aust SME 7 & 10).
- Both SMEs from the UK raised the use of lie detectors (polygraphs) with convicted terrorists. In the context of the UK Desistance and Disengagement program, it was stated that lie detectors are being used as part of a suite of tactics. However, the results of a lie

detector are not the deciding factor in deciding about the authenticity of a client's professed change or whether an individual is acting deceptively (UK SME 2). The point was made that lie detectors can be duped, and that the process of being subjected to a lie detector test creates anxiety, which affects its accuracy. Such anxiety can act as a barrier to disguised compliance and be a deterrent, but the point was made that while lie detectors might have a useful role when working with convicted terrorists, they can lead to the erosion of trust between a client and a case worker/intervention provider (UK SME 1).

Discussions about strategies that can be adopted to detect and manage the risk of disguised compliance are linked to professional judgments about the types of metrics and indicators that demonstrate authentic change. This is because the latter will influence determinations around whether deception is occurring. Several SMEs stated that intervention staff needed to examine actual behaviours – what clients are actually doing i.e., *“there not just turning up and spending all their time on their phone”* (Aust SME 4). Taking account of physical reactions and emotional responses was seen as important when challenging clients on specific ideological beliefs. Behaviours that demonstrated an acceptance of living in a heterogeneous society were regarded as authentic demonstrations (Indo SME 1 & 2). An important consideration of whether actions are authentic expressions of disengagement was whether they were high cost for the individual (UK SME 2; Aust SME 12; Indo SME 1 & 2). For example, one practitioner described that one of the most promising indicators of sincerity in relation to deradicalisation and disengagement is whether a client willingly takes specific steps which have a high cost associated with them e.g., the risk of physical injury, shunning and rejection from previous associates or extremism groups. This SME recalled a case of a right-wing extremist publicly stating online and offline to associates he was going to step away from the extremist group and he paid a very high price in relation to receiving threats, being attacked, shunned and ridiculed on-line. This SME stated: *“given this outcome would one question it as inauthentic”* (Aust SME 12).

While outlining the strategies above, SMEs stressed that in context of case management and review it is unhelpful and impractical to question everything a client may say as deceptive. For example, one German CVE practitioner made the point that it is not uncommon for the same facts to be presented differently at the beginning of a consultation with a client, that then change after a few sessions or after many sessions (German SME 4). Rather than assuming intentional deception was occurring during intervention work, it can demonstrate the evolution of the client/case manager relationship, that includes the aim of promoting the reinterpretation of behaviours and beliefs. One German SME described that the *“aim should be to change*

perspective than the objective detection of false statements” (German SME 2). Similar points were made by other SMEs, with the development of trust-based relationships and rapport building essential to minimising disguised compliance by creating the conditions for openness and honesty. Ensuring these relationships are transparent were identified as essential to minimising the need for clients to lie. This transparency needed to be underpinned by staff engagements that acknowledged and communicated that conversations remain confidential, that disclosed information will not be passed onto authorities and clear explanations of when this would occur. Clients must be told that it is “*OK not to answer certain questions or that some avoidance of certain topics is legitimate*” (German SME 2). While this was essential to rapport building, SMEs acknowledged that in some contexts a more direct approach can be necessary to challenge reluctant clients who are being evasive, but this can still be done in a non-judgemental way (Aust SME 6). It was asserted that it was these types of relationships that are going to be able to pick up sudden changes in behaviours and attempts to avoid issues or obfuscate. As one SME stated, “*working with clients for a prolonged period of time not only leads to the development of mutual trust, but also provides case officers with an internal radar for deciphering between genuine change and feigned change....it allows case workers to get to know their client’s mannerisms and other subtle cues which speak to the authenticity of their words*” (Aust SME 5).

It was stated that the ongoing debate around disguised compliance assumed CVE clients or convicted terrorists were inherently deceptive and can easily manipulate intervention staff. This was cited as disempowering for case workers and program managers and was also misleading. As one CVE practitioner stated “*For some reason, the CVE environment exacerbates the perception of compromised practitioners and the potential risk of manipulation in therapeutic relationships. This dynamic is unfair and disempowering for those actually doing the work*” (Aust SME 11). Another SME made the point that an ongoing focus on whether case workers and program staff are being deceived can make intervention staff jaded about the prospect of client change and create the unhelpful situation of staff constantly questioning their decision-making. The outcome can have the detrimental effect of impacting on the client/case manager relationship, which then influences the overall quality of engagements with clients (Aust SME 12).

Relationship between disguised compliance and risk assessment

All the Australian SMEs had been trained in the use of the VERA-2R and stated that it was not a tool that could be used to detect disguised compliance, nor that its indicators were

designed do so. However, evidence of disguised compliance should be considered when making risk formulations and in scenario planning and deception considered in case formulations. Two SMEs from the UK and Australia stated that scenario planning would be a good practice in managing the risk of disguised compliance, especially in the context of community-based interventions (UK SME 2; Aust SME 11). A UK SME indicated that intervention providers, agencies and probation officers should be prompted to reflect on signs of disguised compliance and make note of its possible occurrence in their reports. However, risk assessments should be carried out by trained, qualified and independent individuals (e.g., psychologists) who can question and follow-up on any noted occurrences of disguised compliance to assess its seriousness and weight that in risk assessments.

The point was made that while risk assessment indicators cannot capture disguised compliance, assessments overtime can help inform observations about certain changes applicable to judgements about protective and risk mitigation factors, such as participation in programs against violent extremism. It was asserted that when it comes to disguised compliance and risk assessment, practitioners need to focus on things that can be reliably and clinically assessed and validated and need to look at other types of behavioural indicators that are not captured in risk assessment tools (Aust SME 11 & 12). Four SMEs declared that offenders and clients do not have to renounce all their beliefs to be assessed as low risk, and that it would be a mistake to have this expectation, which can generate disguised compliance. One SME stated there was a need for a demarcation between the task of assessing extremist risk and the provision of therapeutic support, the latter which can be undermined by a fixation on the former (Aust SME 3).

It was acknowledged that excessive optimism about the capacity of radicalised individuals to change did carry certain risks. The two SMEs from the U.K. made mention of the Usman Khan case (see case studies). One UK SME stated there was some significant naivety amongst agencies about believing that a hardened offender like Khan, who was affiliated with other radicalised individuals and groups, would be reformed through an intervention run by social workers, such as the Living Together program. A problem is that agency group think can lead case managers or intervention staff to more easily accept a common narrative that someone is doing well rather than to critically appraise behaviour as it occurs (UK SME 2).

Similar to points made about the significance of disguised compliance as a problem, several Australian SMEs raised concerns about the impact that the current counter-terrorism legal apparatus in Australia (i.e., control orders, extended supervision orders and continuing

detention) has on risk assessments and the detection and professional interpretation of disguised compliance. For example, one SME made the point that these various legal provisions enhance the stakes for the outcome of risk assessments which creates a significant risk to their integrity (Aust SME 11). It was stated that risk assessment processes are vulnerable and sensitive to errors arising from disguised compliance and that authentic and accurate assessments become even more difficult in the existing legislative context in Australia. The problem is that desperation amongst CVE clients who are the potential target of various provisions can often mimic disguised compliance. The impact of this largely becomes dependent on the interpretation of the risk assessor, which can be flawed and biased as to whether any possible deceptive behaviour indicates ongoing risk.

Conclusion and Key Findings

This study has set out to review the problem of disguised compliance by drawing on a wide evidence-base. It must be acknowledged there are limitations in the study design and with the various information and data sources that were drawn upon. A study on disguised compliance, both its occurrence, detection, and prevention, raises issues around whether it provides a basis and source of knowledge for motivated individuals to better be able to deceive intervention staff. However, as argued by Dean (2022) in the context of assessing the terrorist risk of prisoners, such individuals are likely to already have an awareness about deception and are often not very effective at concealment. The broader literature reviewed here supports the point that deception is not an easy behaviour to maintain. The results have implications for the practice of managing and responding to the risk of disguised compliance. Key lessons arising from the results across the three phases of data collection are summarised below. Readers seeking greater detail and explanation should refer to each corresponding section.

Key lessons from the existing literature

The risk of disguised compliance is a problem that confronts many behavioural change programs and case-managed interventions across a range of areas e.g., corrections, psychology, social work, child protection and police investigative interviewing. Different terms used in the literature comprise deception, false compliance, as well as disguised compliance. It can involve various forms of conduct including lying, manipulation, falsification of evidence, behavioural modification and role playing. For case managers it requires skills and strategies in identifying false intentions and malicious intent.

The literature demonstrates that disguised compliance exists across a spectrum of behaviours and that its occurrence does not always indicate malicious intent. There are contextual and individual factors that influence its occurrence, the degree of sophistication, and sustainability of deceptive behaviour. The interpretation of behaviours that might indicate forms of disguised compliance are influenced by professional biases, assumptions and working practices. The literature indicates that while a person might display deceptive behaviours in the context of an intervention it does not mean that previous actions and engagements were not sincere or inauthentic.

While deception detection is an evolving area of study and practice, the existing literature suggests there is a need to adopt a combination of approaches that involve dialogue, encouragement, information gathering, client follow-up and case review, as well as technology enabled methods. However various approaches of deception detection have pros and cons, which should be considered in efforts aimed at assessing the authenticity of client behaviours and professed authentic demonstrations of change.

Key lessons from the case studies

The three case studies illustrate the risks that can arise from disguised compliance. While there was evidence of deceptive behaviours across the three cases, it would be misleading to assume that this indicates how easily professionals and intervention staff delivering CVE programs can be misled. Across all case examples there were evident gaps in monitoring, case management and review and information sharing between agencies and partners. The cases highlight the risk of relying upon simple compliance indicators to program requirements and emphasise the need for CVE practitioners and managers to scrutinise, record and compare what clients are stating and how they have, or are behaving across different contexts. This can help identify incongruences and any evidence of a motivation to potentially mislead or deceive.

Key lessons from the Subject Matter Expert interviews

The results from the SME provide lessons based on practitioner experience. The SME data indicates that the occurrence of disguised compliance is highly contextual and shaped by individual motivations and capacities, as well as the broader CVE environment. While not dismissing its existence and the risks it presents, disguised compliance across either the correctional or community context was not judged as prolific or highly prevalent. Practitioners pointed to the potential unhelpful and detrimental consequences of the debate surrounding the

occurrence of disguised compliance amongst CVE program participants and convicted terrorists, and how the assumption of deception amongst clients can undermine CVE work.

SMEs referenced a variety of behaviours that can indicate a motivation to mislead, with key flags for possible deception being an abrupt and professed change in support for extremist beliefs and an incongruence between statements and behaviours and efforts to deflect, minimise and deny responsibility. While the occurrence of these behaviours should trigger concern, investigation is required to understand why they are occurring and what the meaning is behind such behaviours and if they indicate residual risk.

SMEs referenced a range of strategies to test the authenticity of client engagement and change. A consistent theme is that authenticity testing needs to draw on a variety of information sources and evidence. While various tactics can be used to detect behaviours that are indicative of disguised compliance, it is not useful for case worker and client engagements to be underpinning by interactions that have the main purpose of detecting deception or false intent. While there must be a level of acknowledgement that disguised compliance is possible and maybe likely amongst some clients, the focus should be on establishing the conditions under which authentic demonstrations of change can emerge. This is where rapport and trust building become so important in the caseworker/client relationship. While such relationships were acknowledged by SMEs as carrying risks, the length and consistency of engagements can help minimize these risks, as well as processes of case management and review involving multi-disciplinary/multi-agency teams. While the existence of deception should be considered in calibrations of extremist risk, the SME findings indicate that extremist risk assessment needs to sit alongside strategies to test client authenticity but should not crowd out, or undermine, efforts to promote authentic demonstrations of disengagement.

Gaps in knowledge about disguised compliance and answering the REA questions

This evidence assessment was framed around five questions as stipulated in the REA specification. It must be acknowledged that the existing evidence relating to certain REA questions is partial and cannot be answered definitively. The REA topics and questions were as follows:

1. A brief review of how disguised compliance is defined in the literature.
2. What distinguishing factors, if any, are present in relation to disguised compliance between post-conviction terrorist offenders and those yet to offend?
3. Do strategies of disguised compliance vary depending on which ideological group, movement or cause individuals identify with, e.g., are there differences in how and at

what stage/s disguised compliance may manifest across individuals allied with Islamist versus right-wing extremist or other ideological or motivational contexts?

4. Where do metrics of authenticity sit within risk assessment frameworks?
5. What countermeasures are used by program participants to defeat forms of authenticity testing? How can such countermeasures be successfully identified and overcome by professionals?

Details relating to answering question one has been reviewed above and discussed across the various sections in this report. The key issue in defining disguised compliance are considerations around intention and the motivation for deception. Disguised compliance is not always indicative of extremist risk or a lack of commitment to disengagement. There is no evidence to indicate that there are discernible differences in the occurrence and manifestation of disguised compliance across terrorist prisoners, those released into the community, or individuals who are identified as at risk of radicalisation. Variations arise from individual differences and capacities and the CVE intervention context, rather than whether an individual belongs to any of these cohorts. Likewise, there is no evidence to indicate that strategies of disguised compliance vary by which ideological group an individual aligns with. Metrics of authenticity testing should draw on a variety of indicators, and while they can help calibrate and inform risk assessment frameworks, that should not be their sole purpose. Metrics of authenticity testing should be used to inform intervention design and program evaluation. The findings reported here outline different behaviours indicative of disguised compliance, but the evidence does not suggest these are always aimed at defeating forms of authenticity testing. Understanding the motivation and reason for why disguised compliance is occurring is central to preventing and managing its occurrence. Effective measures to identify and counter disguised compliance comprise strategies related to case management and review.

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Appendix A

Table 1 – Deception detection techniques

Detection Method/Technique	Efficacy	Limitations	References
<p><u>Deception detection through writing samples, sketch illustrations, and drawing.</u></p> <p>This method specifically targets intentions while drawing on strategic interviewing techniques to actively elicit cues for deceit and truthfulness.</p>	<p>Consistent findings illustrate that people telling the truth offer more detail in sketches and recall. Sketch drawing methods have effectively induced inconsistency in cases of deception. Results also indicate that there is less consistency between sketches and verbal reports when people are lying than when telling the truth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New method of deception detection ▪ The reliability and strength of the associations is not established. ▪ Context for application unclear. 	<p>(Deeb, Vrij, Leal, & Mann, 2021; Geller, Erlen, Kaye, & Fischer, 1991; Izotovas, Leins, Fischer, Vrij, Leal, & Mann, 2011; Leins, Fisher, Vrij, Leal, & Mann, 2011; Vrij et al., 2018; Vrij, Mann, Leal, Fisher, & Deeb, 2020; Sooniste, Granhag, & Strömwall, 2017).</p>
<p><u>Strategic Use of Evidence (SUE) Technique</u></p> <p>This technique requires some critical background information and uses the Unanticipated Questions Approach. This technique is about uncovering false intentions.</p>	<p>Recent studies support the rationale behind this technique by demonstrating that lying suspects experience unanticipated questions as comparatively more cognitively demanding to answer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are some discrepancies in the outcomes related to the timing of evidence disclosure. 	<p>(Clemens, Granhag, & Strömwall, 2013; Luke et., 2013; Sooniste, Granhag, Knieps, & Vrij, 2013; Sorochinski et al., 2014; Vrij & Granhag, 2012; 2014; Vrij et al., 2009; Warmelink et al., 2012)</p>
<p><u>Reid Technique</u></p> <p>A technique which involves conducting a preliminary interview where “behaviour-provoking” questions are asked and the suspect’s verbal and nonverbal reactions are observed.</p>	<p>Behavioural cues indicated by the Reid technique are faint and offer no diagnostic value. Training does not significantly improved deception detection accuracy. Experts such as police, judges, psychiatrists, customs inspectors only perform only slightly better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no empirical evidence supporting the diagnostic value of the behavioural cues that investigators are trained to observe. ▪ Experienced police detectives exhibited the erroneous and biased responses. Police tend to confidently and erroneously prejudge guilt and this technique was only found to enhance this pre-existing bias. 	<p>(Bond & DePaulo, 2006; DePaulo et al., 2003; Kassin, 2014; Kassin & Fong, 1999; Kassin et al., 2007; Meissner & Kassin, 2002; Vrij, 2008; Vrij, Granhag, & Porter, 2010; Vrij, Mann, & Fisher, 2006; Woody & Forrest, 2020)</p>

<p><u>Fabricated scenario technique</u> Using the techniques of highly confident suggestions, an investigator will claim that the suspect has failed a polygraph test (a scenario which the investigator knows did not happen).</p>	<p>Extensive research findings illustrate the link between suggestibility and the likelihood of falsely confessing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This technique has been implicated in securing false confessions. ▪ This technique is ethically and legally problematic as it requires the investigator to lie to the suspect about evidence. ▪ Very limited evidence base. 	<p>(Drake, 2010; Gudjonsson, 1992; 2003; 2013; Woody & Forrest, 2020)</p>
<p>Observation of verbal and non-verbal cues.</p>	<p>The effects are too weak to be used for reliable individual classifications of deception.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are very few verbal- and non-verbal cues which are indicative of deception. ▪ The development of this technique is still in its' infancy. ▪ There is conflicting evidence in relation to certain indicators and their corresponding affect. 	<p>(Bond & DePaulo 2006; DePaulo et al., 2003; Gamer & Suchotzki, 2019; Hartwig & Bond, 2011; 2014; Sporer & Schwandt, 2007; Vrij, 2008; Ruedy, Moore, Gino, & Schweitzer, 2013; Vrij, Granhag, Mann, & Leal, 2011)</p>
<i>Technological Assistance Detection</i>			
<p><u>The polygraph used in conjunction with the Control Question Technique (CQT)</u> The questioning technique involves asking a suspect three different types of questions: relevant questions, irrelevant questions, and control questions. The control questions are formulated in a deliberately vague way that makes it unlikely that anyone could honestly deny the questions. The control questions are also designed to induce a significantly stronger arousal when telling the truth and a significantly weaker arousal when someone is lying. During a pre-test interview, the polygraph examiner (incorrectly) explains that answering these questions with a 'yes' would be taken as an indication of guilt. Consequently, people are lured into answering the control questions with 'no' (manipulative).</p>	<p>The accuracy of the CQT is between 8% and 10% in terms of false classifications of liars (hit rate among guilty suspects was between 90 – 92 per cent) and between 9% and 20% of false classifications of truth tellers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The CQT is ethically and legally problematic as it requires the examiner to lie to the suspect about the test principle. ▪ There is no theoretical rationale for the expected differential response patterns between innocent and guilty suspects. ▪ False classification rates are higher for innocent suspects. 	<p>(Furedy & Ben-Shakhar, 1991; Gamer & Suchotzki, 2019; Kircher, Horowitz, & Raskin, 1988; Raskin & Honts, 2002)</p>

<p><u>Polygraph used in combination with the Concealed Information Test (CIT).</u></p> <p>The rationale behind the CIT technique is measuring the recognition of crucial information and not directly measuring deception. For example, during a CIT, questions referring to details that could only be known by a person who committed the action (e.g. crime) are posed to the suspect/individual being interviewed.</p>	<p>Unlike the CQT, the CIT has been developed based on a psychological theory.</p> <p>Validity studies indicate that between 16 and 24 per cent of false classifications of guilty suspects (sensitivity: 76 –84 per cent) and between 4 and 17 per cent in false classifications of innocent suspects (specificity: 83 – 96 per cent)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accuracy estimates are roughly in a similar range as the CQT. Importantly, false classifications concerning innocent suspects was significantly lower 	<p>(Ben-Shakhar & Elaad, 2003; Elaad, 1998; Furedy & BenShakhar, 1991; Gamer & Suchotzki, 2019; MacLaren, 2001; Meijer, Klein-Selle, Elber, & Ben-Shakhar, 2014; Verschuere, Ben-Shakhar, & Meijer, 2011)</p>
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