



CELL Exhibit Pre DVE Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: *Introducing Domestic Violent Extremism to Reduce Risk*

Grade Level: *9th-12th grade is our target audience; occasionally 8th grade*

Duration: *50-60 minutes*

Content Area: *What is the topic and is this a pre lesson, lesson held during a tour, or a post tour lesson*

Standards Content Area: *Civics, History, Comprehensive Health*

Overview:

Domestic Violent Extremism is a growing threat as documented by the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI. This foundational lesson introduces key concepts and an opportunity to analyze the Oklahoma City Bombing while looking at the current threat landscape of DVE today.

Learning Objectives:

In this lesson, students will:

- Develop working knowledge of Domestic Violent Extremism
- Build preliminary understanding of DVE's impact and current threat landscape on the United States.

Essential Questions:

- Factual:
 - What is domestic violent extremism?
- Conceptual:
 - What is the threat of DVE today in the United States?
 - Why is DVE a threat to democracy?

Key Terms:

- Domestic Violent Extremist: an individual based and operating primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States who seeks to further their ideological goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence. (DHS and FBI)
- Ideology: a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy (Oxford Languages)
- Domestic Terrorism (FBI Definition): Violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature.
- Department of Homeland Security: U.S. federal executive department with a mission to secure the nation from the many threats, created in the aftermath of 9/11/2001.
- Threat landscape: Collection of potential and identified security threats.

Lesson Activities:

Activity 1: Introduction of the CELL (Counterterrorism Education Learning Lab) & Code of Conduct (10 minutes)



Overview: Exploring The CELL's website will provide students with background about the exhibit, the various programs offered by The CELL and how learning will be supported by the institution.

Directions:

Students will explore the CELL (thecell.org) to find the following:

CANVA Slide 1: Explore thecell.org

- CELL Mission Statement
- Identify 1 or 2 global security issues they think the U.S. face today
- Champion Change tab (2 national security experts)

CANVA Slide 2: The CELL

- The CELL, a non-profit and non-partisan organization. While the **content can be distressing**, the CELL is committed to **providing a brave space** to learn about the **trends and signs of radicalization and extremism**.
- You will get a better understanding of domestic violent extremism and the **process of radicalization**, including **recruitment strategies** used by violent extremists.

CANVA Slide 3: The CELL will:

1. Provide valuable insights into the motivations behind such acts, the recruitment tactics employed by extremist groups, and the impact of these activities on our society.
2. Encourage open dialogue, allowing students to ask questions, share their perspectives, and learn from one another through the virtual docent.
3. Promote empathy, tolerance, and respect, to foster an inclusive learning environment that values diverse opinions and encourages constructive discussions.

CANVA Slide 4:

Class code of conduct while engaging in the upcoming content and on our tour at the CELL.

Some ideas include:

- *Be aware that everyone has different experiences and reactions to the content of DVE*
- *If uncomfortable about something, let an adult know*
- *Make space for people to learn new ideas and have beliefs challenged*
- *Respect others' opinions*
- *Come from a place of curiosity*
- *Ask questions and listen for others to answer*

Activity 2: Domestic Violent Extremism at a Glance

Overview: This short video will provide background information on the complexities law enforcement and the judicial branch have on charging actors with domestic violent extremism. Understanding the ideologies, motives and charges associated with domestic violent extremism and other like crimes is critical in preventing the threat from growing.



Directions: Watch the video and then answer the comprehension questions.

CANVA Slide 5:

Watch [video](#) from 0:40-3:10

- Questions to consider:
 - What makes it difficult to treat American based extremist groups similarly to those designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations?
 - *There is not a domestic terrorism charge*
 - Nikki Floris, FBI Deputy Assistant Director, testified saying that, “we cannot charge, nor do we have designated domestic terrorist groups,” what is the implication of this?
 - *Answers will vary*
 - Because there is not a domestic terrorism charge, how do authorities still charge people with crimes?
 - *Gun charges, explosive charges, threat/hoax charges, hate crimes*

Activity 3: The Significance of the Oklahoma City Bombing (12-15 minutes)

Overview: The video provides context about the events and aftermath of the Oklahoma City Bombing, one of the deadliest acts of domestic violent extremism in recent history. This gives students an understanding of the consequences of not having domestic violent extremist charges and how law enforcement and safety officials work within the parameters of the Constitution and legal courts to hold actors accountable for their extremist actions.

Directions: As a class view the video and then answer the comprehension questions.

- CANVA Slide 6:
[History Channel Oklahoma City Bombing: Why did it occur and who was behind it?](#) (5 minutes 2 seconds)
 - *Teacher note: The Oklahoma City bombing is documented as an act of DVE; however, the U.S. does not have a criminal charge for DVE so McVeigh was charged with other offenses.*
- CANVA Slide 7:
Comprehension Questions (*and answers*):
 1. What happened at the Oklahoma City Bombing?
Devastating terrorist attack on American soil, rental truck with homemade explosives detonated outside of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, 168 people dead. 16 block radii of destruction, 850 people injured
 2. What motivated Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols to do this horrendous act?
Anti-government sentiments, reading the Turner Diaries, fueled by federal raid of Waco, Texas
 3. How did Oklahoma City recover?
12,384 people volunteered to help, 16 government organizations helped organize and mobilize resources,
 4. What were Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols charged with and were they convicted?
McVeigh was tried and convicted on 11 different counts; Nichols one count of conspiracy and 8 counts of involuntary manslaughter, then tried again and convicted on 161 counts of murder.
- CANVA Slide 8:



- Teacher to share the verdicts; [McVeigh Guilty on all 11 Counts](#):
 - COUNT 1: Guilty
 - Conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction against persons in the United States and against federal property, resulting in death, grievous bodily injury and destruction of the building.
 - COUNT 2: Guilty
 - Use of a weapon of mass destruction, resulting in death and personal injury.
 - COUNT 3: Guilty
 - Destruction by explosive of a federal building, causing death and injury.
 - COUNTS 4-11: Guilty
 - First-degree murder of eight federal law enforcement officers.

Activity 4: Understanding Domestic Violent Extremism (10 minutes)

Overview: It is important to have a collective understanding of terms, and this activity will provide an opportunity for the class to unpack the FBI's definition of Domestic Terrorism, often used interchangeably with domestic violent extremism. The class will then create a working definition to compare with the FBI's and the CELL's definitions throughout the remainder of the lessons and tour.

Directions: As a class review the FBI's definition of Domestic Terrorism, then create a working definition of Domestic Violent Extremism.

- CANVA Slide 9
 - FBI Definition of Domestic Terrorism: Violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups to further ideological goals stemming from domestic influences, such as those of a political, religious, social, racial, or environmental nature.
- CANVA Slide 10
 - Class reviews the FBI's definition of domestic violent extremism and develops an operating definition of Domestic Violent Extremism for their understanding.
 - This should include:
 - Individual or group that acts violently.
 - Act is committed to further ideological goals related to domestic influences (political, religious, social, racial or environmental)
 - Act occurs within the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S.
- CANVA Slide 11
 - Class Vote: Was the Oklahoma City Bombing an act of DVE, why or why not?

Teacher note: *There is a distinct difference between domestic violent extremism (domestic terrorism) and domestic violence. The difference is that an act of DVE is connected to a specific ideology, or a combination of ideologies. Domestic violence is an act of violence, not connected to an ideology. Additionally, there is a distinct difference between international terrorism and domestic terrorism and the criminal charges, or lack thereof for both. There will be a specific gallery at the exhibit, Terror versus Terrorism, that will present more information about these topics.*

Activity 5: Conclusion and Exhibit Tour Prep (5 minutes)



Overview: As exemplified in the definition and the Oklahoma City Bombing attack, DVE is contentious, tragic and has long-lasting effects on the human spirit. DVE also comes in many different forms, including actions and words. Because of this, it is important that we understand characteristics of DVE and hold ourselves accountable to being an antidote to DVE through our own actions and words.

Directions: As a class discuss overarching characteristics of DVE and then conclude with inviting student to consider how they can be an antidote to DVE by creating an individual code of conduct for visiting the CELL and engaging with others.

- CANVA Slide 12
 - Characteristics of Domestic Violent Extremism
- CANVA Slide 13
 - Individual Code of Conduct in keeping communities safe from DVE:
 1. *Listen to learn*
 2. *Be empathetic to others experiences and personal connections to DVE*
 3. *Take risks and be accountable for my own behavior*
 4. *Be aware of my own limitations in understanding*

Standards:

Colorado Academic Standards:

- SS.HS.1.GLE.2: Analyze and evaluate key concepts of continuity and change, cause and effect, complexity, unity and diversity, and significant ideas in the United States from Reconstruction to the present.
- SS.HS.4.GLE.1: Research and formulate positions on government policies and on local, state, tribal, and national issues to be able to participate and engage in a civil society.
- SS.HS.4.GLE.2: Evaluate the purposes, roles, and limitations of the structures and functions of government.
- RW.HS.2.GLE.3: Utilize context, parts of speech, grammar, and word choice to understand narrative, argumentative, and informational texts.
- CH.HS.3.GLE.1: Advocate to improve or maintain positive mental, emotional well-being for self and others.
- CH.HS.3.GLE.3: Advocate to improve or maintain positive mental, emotional well-being for self and others.
- CH.HS.4.GLE.5: Analyze the factors that influence community and societal beliefs that underlie violence, and describe relationships, attitudes, behavior, and vulnerability to violence.
- CH.HS.4.GLE.6: Analyze the underlying causes of self-harming behavior and harming others, and identify strategies involved in seeking help.
- CH.HS.4.GLE.7: Identify the emotional and physical consequences of violence, and find strategies to deal with, prevent, and report them.
- CH.HS.4.GLE.10: Advocate for changes in the home, school, or community that would increase safety.

Skills:

- Global/Cultural Awareness: Compare attitudes and beliefs as an individual to others
- Civic Engagement: Identify and reflect upon personal connections to community systems



- Character: Demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect related to personal decisions

(Additional) Resources:

- *List citations alphabetically, in Chicago style, for sources used in this lesson's development.*

Materials:

- [History Channel Oklahoma City Bombing: Why did it occur and who was behind it?](#) (5 minutes 2 seconds)
- ["McVeigh Guilty on all 11 Counts"](#) by L. Romano, 1997
- [Office of Intelligence and Analysis Homeland Threat Assessment 2024 \(page 3\)](#)
- Student handout
- Canva Slidedeck