Student Notetaker

Shots Fired On Campus

Choose to Survive
Lecture 1: Survival Mindset & Courses of Action

Objectives:

- Describe the protective shield
- Describe “figure out.”
- Describe “get out.”
- Describe “call out.”
- Describe “hide out.”
- Describe “keep out.”
- Describe “spread out.”
- Describe “take out.”

The bottom line is that you need to take direct responsibility for your personal safety and security. The first step towards this goal is to develop a survival mindset. A survival mindset enables you to act quickly and effectively.
A survival mindset is a protective shield comprised of three components: **Awareness**, **Preparation**, and **Rehearsal**

The first component, **Awareness**, involves taking the time necessary to gain a basic understanding of an active shooter situation. Do you know what gunshots sound like? Some people may never have heard gunshots in real life. It’s not unusual for someone to think the sounds they hear are anything but gunshots.

There is no substitute for **Preparation**. It includes looking at your school environment through a survival lens; a lens that focuses on the “what if” questions. “What if” questions are critical in developing effective response strategies.

Survivors prepare themselves both **mentally** and **emotionally** to do whatever it takes to make it through their situation. They become stakeholders in their own safety and security.
Rehearsing may include either mentally and/or physically “walking through” your “what if” plan. Practicing your plan will reduce your response time and build your confidence. In essence, your rehearsal serves as a survival inoculation.

It’s important to understand that any action taken or not taken during an active shooter incident may involve life-threatening risk.

Law enforcement recommends that if you hear popping noises that you think may be gunshots, not to waste time trying to validate your own perception. They recommend you act on the chance that they may be gunshots and evacuate immediately through the nearest door or window. It’s far better to err on the side of caution.
First, you must **figure out** the situation—what’s going on? Where is it happening? Who is doing it? This is the beginning of your personal assessment process—the continuous evaluation of the situation. This continuous evaluation will allow you to take the appropriate survival action. Use all of your senses in your assessment—and do it quickly. Trust your intuition—your “gut” feeling. It’s a built-in survival mechanism. Some people say it’s “**knowing without knowing why**,” and it’s an invaluable tool. Once you **figure out** what is going on, you’ll be better prepared to select one or more of the described actions.

Research shows that there’s a real difference between the reactions of people who’ve been trained to face stressful, life-threatening situations and those who have not.
A survival mindset enables you to act quickly and effectively.

If you determine that you can get out to a safer area, than do so. Get out fast. Don't wait for others to validate your decision. Leave your belongings behind. The best way to survive an active shooter situation is not to be where the shooter is—and not to go where he can see you.
In some cases, you may not be able to get out. The shooter may be between you and the only exit, or perhaps you would have to enter the area or the hallway where the shooter is positioned. It might be safer for you to remain in place because you’re well hidden and well protected. In any case, if you can’t get out, then you must find a place to hide out.

Once you’ve found your spot to hide out, you’ll want to keep out the shooter. Hiding in a room that can be locked and that has plenty of things to hide behind is best. Blockade the door with heavy furniture (even if the door can be locked). If the shooter is nearby, just lock the door and become totally silent. Turn out the lights. Turn off any radios or other noise-producing sources that might alert the shooter to your presence. Don’t forget to silence your cell phone or pager, if you have one. As soon as you have the opportunity, and without attracting the shooter’s attention, call the 911 emergency number with the information described earlier in this lesson.
If someone near you has a life-threatening injury, and if it’s possible for you to provide first-aid to keep them alive, then do so. Let others around you know what is happening and try to remain calm. Demonstrating calmness can have a contagious effect on others; it will help them to remain focused on survival.

While spreading out in a room, quietly talk about what you’ll do if the shooter enters. Whatever action you’re taking, whether it’s get out or hide out and keep out, you should help out where you can. Help others escape as you go. Help prevent others from entering the danger zone.

If you determine there is no other option than to take out the shooter, then you must be prepared to do whatever is necessary to neutralize the threat. To do this, you’ll need to become more aggressive than you ever thought possible. This means you must either disrupt his actions or incapacitate him. Throwing things, yelling, using improvised weapons can all be effective in this situation, but total commitment and absolute resolve are critical.
Law enforcement suggests that if there are several of you in a room, and you have nowhere to go, develop an action plan. If a shooter begins beating on the door and enters, get ready to act. Once he comes into the room, your best option may be to rush him and do the best you can.

A college campus has some unique characteristics that are important to consider. For example, what if an incident begins while you’re on your way to class or walking across campus? If someone starts shooting, stay in motion and find protection. It could be a tree, or a wall, or anything that will give you some protection while you figure out the situation and see if you need to do more.

Classrooms and lecture halls are unique to college campuses and they’ve also been the location of prior critical incidents. What could you do if a shooter enters a classroom or lecture hall? There might be some opportunities to get out either through other doors or a window. But realistically, people in the center of the classroom may not have the opportunity to get out. In that case, your only option might be to spread out, take cover, or take out the shooter.
Lecture 2:
Law Enforcement Response; Distinctions Between an Active Shooter and a Hostage Situation

Objectives:

- Explain how to respond to law enforcement responders.
- Describe key information needed by law enforcement responders.
- Describe the distinctions between an active shooter and a hostage-taker.
- Describe pre-incident indicators/behaviors of concern.
- Describe preventive measures to avert violence.
Do not expect officers to assist you as you get out. Their primary job is to locate the shooter and neutralize the threat. In all likelihood, medical assistance will follow once the threat has been neutralized.

If you are in a room and officers or a SWAT team comes in, you must not present a threat to them. Do not point at them or the shooter. Do not scream or yell. Be quiet and compliant. Do exactly as they say. Remember that they have no way of immediately knowing whether you are one of the shooters.
The officers have been taught that “hands kill” and they are trained to first look at people’s hands. Raise your arms, spread your fingers, clearly show your hands as you drop to the floor, and spread your arms and legs. They will know immediately that you are not armed or aggressive. That will help them focus on anyone who is armed and prevent them from mistaking you as one of the shooters in a very dangerous situation.

- Name of shooter (if known)
- Number of shooters
- Description of shooter
- Location of shooter
- Number and types of weapons carried by shooter
It is important to understand that there is a distinct difference between an active shooter situation and a hostage situation, which require different behavioral responses on the part of the victims.
An active shooter has been defined as an armed individual who has used deadly force and continues to do so with unrestricted access to additional victims. Active shooter situations have involved single shooters, multiple shooters, close encounters, distant encounters, targeted students, random victims, single-room confrontations, and mobile confrontations. The only certainty seems to be that no two situations are alike.

A hostage situation involves an armed and dangerous individual, who may or may not have already used deadly force. In most instances, his access will be restricted due to his own choosing or changing events, such as the arrival of law enforcement. A significant distinction in a hostage situation is the containment of the offender and victim. The motive of hostage-takers can vary between substantive or expressive.
Expressive motives include compensating for a loss (disgruntled individuals, jilted lovers, rejected spouses, aggrieved individuals, idealistic fanatics, individuals with mental illness, etc.) Hostage-takers act in an emotional, senseless, and often-self-destructive way. Unable to control their emotions in response to life’s many stressors, they are motivated by anger, rage, frustration, hurt, confusion, or depression. They have no clear goals and often exhibit purposeless, self-defeating behavior. Such individuals have either no substantive or escape demands or totally unrealistic demands for which they would have no reasonable expectation of fulfillment.
Hostage survival can be enhanced by taking the following actions:

- Remain calm
- Follow directions
- Avoid sudden movements
- Maintain eye contact (but don’t stare)
- Find the middle position (not too assertive/passive)
- Personalize yourself
- Don’t argue
- Don’t be a nuisance
- Don’t turn your back
Patience is essential during hostage situations. Law enforcement’s negotiation efforts will take time; be mentally prepared for a protracted situation. Historically, most hostage situations have been negotiated and ended peacefully.

Active Shooter vs. Hostage Situation

- Law Enforcement Negotiation Efforts
  - Will take time, be mentally prepared for a protracted situation
  - Law Enforcement negotiators will use active listening skills to:
    - Communicate with hostage-taker
    - Defuse emotions
    - Build rapport
    - Work towards a peaceful resolution
  - Historically, most hostage situations have been resolved through negotiations and ended peacefully

Behaviors of Concern
Interestingly, the same survival mindset we’ve been talking about today can sometimes prevent a situation from becoming violent in the first place.

Before addressing the types of violence and the behaviors of concern, we will highlight some common myths and realities.

Common Myths include:

- “Out of the blue”
- “Never saw it coming”
- “He just snapped”
- “Violence is random, spontaneous, and unpredictable”
- “Most situations will resolve themselves if given a cooling off period”
- “Warning signs are always predictive of violent behavior”
Realities are:

- Threats are almost always present
- Leakage, warnings made through comments (intentional or unintentional) can reveal clues to feelings, thoughts, fantasies, or intentions that may result in violence
- Erratic/abnormal behavior is a principal warning sign of future violence
- Bullying is often a steppingstone to violence
- The path toward violence is an evolutionary one with signposts along the way

There may be warning signs of behaviors of concern that something is wrong.
Other behaviors of concern may include:

- Increasing belligerence
- Ominous, specific threats
- Hypersensitivity to criticism
- Recent acquisition/fascination with weapons

- Preoccupation with violent themes
- Interest in recently publicized events
- Outburst of anger
- Extreme disorganization
- Noticeable changes in behavior
- Homicidal/suicidal comments or threats
Although a suicidal threat may not be perceived as threatening to others, it is, nonetheless, a serious danger sign.

You have many options when it comes to passing this information on to someone who can act on it. Take advantage of one of those options. If you wish to maintain your anonymity, there are ways to do that and still get the information—this vital information—to someone who can take some action on it and potentially prevent a tragedy. **It's okay to say something.**
There have been numerous shootings across the country that have been prevented by students sensing that something was wrong.

Effective communicators are non-threatening, nonjudgmental, worthy of respect, and willing to listen. An often overlooked area, where an individual can make a significant difference, is taking the time to listen to a “troubled” individual.

The simple act of listening can be a highly effective contribution to a safe campus. It’s important to remember that it’s everyone’s responsibility to keep the campus safe.