

Tactical De-escalation Techniques

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Police Training and Education



Table of Contents

Reverence for Human Life	4
Chapter 1: Tactical De-escalation Defined.....	7
Chapter 2: Planning.....	10
Introduction	10
General Planning.....	10
Specific Planning	12
Fluid Planning.....	14
Conclusion.....	15
Chapter 3: Assessment	16
Introduction	16
Location.....	16
Suspect(s).....	17
Victim(s) and/or Witnesses.....	18
Available Resources	19
Conclusion.....	19
Chapter 4: Time.....	21
Introduction	21
Distance.....	22
Cover	24
Conclusion.....	24
Chapter 5: Redeployment and/or Containment.....	26
Introduction	26

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

Redeployment..... 26

Containment 28

Conclusion..... 29

Chapter 6: Other Resources..... 30

 Introduction 30

 Specialized Units 30

 Outside Agencies 31

 Technology..... 31

 Suspect’s Known Contacts/Family 31

 Conclusion..... 32

Chapter 7: Lines of Communication 33

 Introduction 33

 Radio Communication..... 33

 Officer to Officer Communication 34

 Subject/Suspect Communication..... 35

 Victim/Witness Communication..... 36

 Conclusion..... 37

Chapter 8: Debriefing..... 38

 Introduction 38

 Officers Debriefing Incidents in the Field 38

 Instructors Debriefing Role-Play Scenarios..... 39

 Conclusion..... 39

Chapter 9: Facilitation Questions 41

 Planning..... 41

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

Assessment 43

Time 45

Redeployment and/or Containment 47

Other Resources..... 49

Lines of Communication 50

Chapter 10: Role-Play Scenario Exemplars 52

 Man with a Knife Radio Call 52

 Loud Music Radio Call 54

 415 Gang Group Radio Call 56

 Domestic Violence Radio Call 59

 Male with Mental Illness Radio Call..... 63

Reverence for Human Life

The purpose of this resource guide is to further the Los Angeles Police Department's mission to preserve human life by giving course designers, instructors, and training coordinators the tools necessary to successfully integrate de-escalation techniques, strategies, and tactics, into their training programs. The following content demonstrates the LAPD's commitment to reverence for human life, and will provide training personnel with the information necessary to instill that same reverence in their students.

While not intended to be completely exhaustive on the subject of de-escalation as it relates to police work, this guide will be a helpful resource in the creation and delivery of effective police training related to tactical de-escalation techniques. It will help training personnel fulfill their mission to provide state of the art, meaningful, realistic, and relevant training to in-service and recruit officers in order to prepare them for field duty. It includes an expanded definition of tactical de-escalation, descriptions of each of the primary techniques of de-escalation and how they relate to one another, an overview of debriefing lessons learned and how to debrief the use of de-escalation techniques, as well as course design materials such as facilitation questions, role-play scenario training exemplars, and role-play scenario debrief questions.

This guide is only a resource for trainers and as such is not intended to be used directly by patrol officers, nor is it intended to create new department policy. It is merely an aid for training personnel, designed to facilitate successful implementation of de-escalation techniques and to reinforce the guiding principle of reverence for human life in a variety of courses. It may be used to create new courses specifically targeting de-escalation techniques as a learning objective, or it may be used to add certain elements of de-escalation to pre-existing courses where those elements naturally apply. In addition, this guide will aid instructors delivering any course content to identify and elicit the elements of de-escalation and reverence for human life from their current training programs.

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

It is important that course designers and instructors understand that this guide should always be used in conjunction with the law, department policy, and our guiding principle of reverence for human life. As such, any applicable case law, as well as LAPD Use of Force Directive No. 1 (July 2009), Tactical De-escalation Techniques Directive No. 16 (October 2016), and the ever-present principle of reverence for human life should be the foundation upon which any de-escalation training is built. This guide will serve as a helpful resource to come alongside those foundational documents and concepts, and will provide trainers with additional direction regarding the creation and delivery of tactical de-escalation techniques training.

As with any training material, this resource guide provides only the basic concept. Deviation from these basic concepts by officers in the field sometimes occurs due to the fluid and rapidly evolving nature of law enforcement encounters and the environment in which they occur. Deviations may range from minor, typically procedural or technical, to substantial deviations from Department tactical training. Any deviations are to be explained by the involved officer(s), and justification for substantial deviation from Department tactical training shall be articulated and must meet the objectively reasonable standard of the Department's Use of Force policy. It is the job of the instructor to ensure that they transfer knowledge, skills, and attitude to their students so that they can understand and apply the basic concept.

Additionally, trainers should seek to take students to the next level of learning and teach them to analyze and articulate their actions. This guide provides resources for instructors to assist them in teaching their students how to explain what they did and why they did it. Specifically, it includes thought-provoking facilitation questions which will elicit critical thinking from the students, as well as a guide to aid instructors in debriefing role-play scenarios and video case studies. The content provided in this guide will help instructors take their students beyond a mere cognitive understanding of de-escalation techniques and launch them into the realm of real world application and analysis. In this way, instructors play a critical role in shaping the actual practices of the officers in the field.

The creation of this resource guide demonstrates the LAPD's commitment to its mission, vision, and values, and it is expected that all tactical de-escalation training seeks to uphold, promote, and exemplify these values. As such, the content and course design materials

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

provided in this guide have been created to help trainers deliver courses that will in turn transfer the department's core values to their students. As students learn to think critically, answer challenging questions, and make sound judgments and decisions during tense encounters, they will be simultaneously aligning their values with those of the LAPD. Tactical de-escalation techniques fall directly in line with our mission to safeguard lives, reduce fear, and maintain public confidence. In addition, these techniques demonstrate the department's ongoing commitment to reverence for human life. Tactical de-escalation at its crux is a practical application of these values.

Chapter 1: Tactical De-escalation Defined

In October 2016, the LAPD published Directive No. 16 – Tactical De-escalation Techniques, which gave officers a working definition of de-escalation. In this directive the definition is stated as:

Tactical de-escalation involves the use of techniques to reduce the intensity of an encounter with a suspect and enable an officer to have additional options to gain voluntary compliance or mitigate the need to use a higher level of force while maintaining control of the situation. **Note:** Tactical de-escalation does not require that an officer compromise his or her safety or increase the risk of physical harm to the public. De-escalation should only be used when it is safe and prudent to do so. (Los Angeles Police Department, 2016)

The directive goes on to add that given the nature of police work, “officers may not have sufficient time or reasonable options available to resolve the situation without the need to use objectively reasonable force.” It is important that trainers understand both the benefits of de-escalation techniques, as well as their limitations. As always, the use of force by officers must be guided by the principle of reverence for human life and tactical de-escalation techniques are some of the tools that officers can use to practice that principle in the line of duty.

Tactical de-escalation techniques apply to a myriad of different aspects of police work, including many different types of radio calls and other encounters with the public. The basic elements and concepts of de-escalation have been taught and employed by Los Angeles police officers for decades. With the advent of Directive No. 16, officers now have a clearly designed path to follow to ensure that they can effectively apply these techniques that they already know. In addition, this policy gives officers a framework to clearly articulate their actions after an encounter with a suspect. The directive identifies six techniques that officers should use to de-escalate an intense tactical situation. Each of these is distinct and yet they overlap in various ways during their application. This resource guide will expand on the basic descriptions

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

given in the directive, and will give instructors and course designers more insight into creative ways that they can apply these techniques in the training environment. As always, trainers should strive to provide state of the art, meaningful, realistic, and relevant training.

The six de-escalation techniques identified in Directive No. 16 are Planning, Assessment, Time, Redeployment, Other Resources, and Lines of Communication, and can be easily committed to memory by using the acronym P.A.T.R.O.L. LAPD officers are well trained and well versed in each of these techniques already, but utilizing P.A.T.R.O.L. will help to create a more organized and deliberate approach to de-escalation in the line of duty. It also provides the in-depth detail that instructors need to challenge students to go beyond a basic understanding of de-escalation and lead them into serious critical thinking, analyzing, and articulation of their actions.

It is also necessary to understand that the use of force by officers does not indicate that de-escalation techniques failed or were not used. There are many circumstances in which officers may ultimately use force even after successfully employing de-escalation techniques. The use of force in and of itself should not be construed as a failure to de-escalate. Because officers are often forced to make split-second decisions in circumstances that are tense, uncertain, rapidly changing, and dangerous, it is possible, and even likely, that officers may successfully de-escalate a given situation and still use force. In other words, officers may use techniques to reduce the intensity of an encounter with a suspect and mitigate the need to use a higher level of force, but still need to use some level of force. For example, officers may de-escalate a potentially deadly situation to one in which they utilize a bean bag shotgun, or other less lethal device. In this circumstance, their use of de-escalation techniques was successful, and ultimately would show a reverence for human life and a commitment to the mission of the department. The fact that they used force should not diminish the perception of success in de-escalating the situation. In the training environment, it is important for instructors to clearly communicate this component of de-escalation to their students. In addition, it is vital that trainers design and deliver training that gives officers the most accurate and realistic practice possible, given the available resources. As Directive No. 16 states in its conclusion, “some situations require an immediate response and de-escalation techniques are neither viable nor

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

effective options.” (Los Angeles Police Department, 2016) In other words, sometimes the best way to mitigate the level of force used is to use force quickly, when the opportunity first presents itself. In some cases, the failure to use a lower level of force earlier in the conflict could result in officers needing to use a higher level of force later. Quality training, therefore, must include the discussion of both types of scenarios, those in which tactical de-escalation techniques are a viable option, and those in which they are not. The use or non-use of force during training scenarios should not be used as the ultimate determiner of the quality of the de-escalation techniques employed by the students. This will ensure that the students are not given a false sense of security, or inadvertently internalize the idea that tactical de-escalation techniques are a foolproof strategy to mitigating any use of force. It will also prevent students from unconsciously reducing these practical and effective techniques to the realm of the training environment only, and will encourage them to utilize them on a daily basis as they police the City of Los Angeles.

The next several chapters will focus on the details of each de-escalation technique. Since each technique is extremely nuanced, and their application within law enforcement is nearly infinite in its variations, it should be noted that this guide does not provide a complete and exhaustive look at every element. It will, however, expand on the descriptions provided in Directive No. 16, and give training personnel the content necessary to teach the basic concept. Officers will then be equipped to utilize the basic concepts in their field duties in any way that they may apply.

Chapter 2: Planning

Introduction

Planning is the first, and possibly the most extensive, de-escalation technique. As Directive No. 16 states, planning involves officers utilizing a coordinated approach. This approach begins long before the incident, moves through the initiation of the incident and the arrival of the officers at scene, and continues until the end is resolved. It is vital that plans be fluid and flexible, and officers must be ready to adapt when new information becomes available. There are three basic phases to planning, and they are distinct from one another based on the time that they occur. It is helpful to think of them on a timeline and officers should be familiar with each of these phases. The three phases are:

- General planning
- Specific planning
- Fluid planning

General Planning

General planning is the first step on the planning timeline and refers to planning that is not specific to, and occurs well before, the incident. General planning includes training, roll call briefings, discussing tactics with other officers, and visualization.

Planning starts with training and preparation that is done even before officers respond to an incident. Because planning requires a coordinated approach, it is necessary that officers are familiar with sound tactics. Training ensures that officers will speak the same tactical language and be familiar with the same basic concepts, which greatly increases efficiency in the field. Of course, it is not possible to train for every situation that officers will encounter in the field, but proper training can lay the foundation for effective coordination and give officers the tools and basic concepts necessary to successfully de-escalate. Using sound tactics is a perishable skill and officers must be diligent to stay proficient. As such these topics should be

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

revisited by officers throughout their career. Training provides the opportunity to learn and make mistakes in a controlled environment without the consequences that those mistakes would bring in the field. It is unrealistic for officers to plan, coordinate, and adapt to a dynamic and stressful situation if they have not already trained diligently and participated in similar scenarios in a controlled environment. Effective training equips officers and supervisors for the rest of the planning phases and the other P.A.T.R.O.L. de-escalation techniques.

General planning also includes briefings that should occur daily in the form of a roll call. This is an opportunity for the watch to receive general information on crime trends in the division, specific areas of concern, and crime alerts and/or be-on-the-lookout flyers. Officers should make it part of their daily planning routine to review crime alerts and stay up to date on crime trends in the area. This can prove to be another helpful tool that officers can use to create an effective plan.

One of the most common forms of general planning that officers should use is discussing tactics with their partner and other officers. Minimally, this conversation should include topics such as who will take the role of the contact officer and the cover officer, weapon systems, where each officer keeps their backup weapons, and who will be designated as the less lethal officer if necessary. These conversations can and should go much deeper into tactics. Officers should regularly be discussing and reviewing foot pursuit tactics, vehicle pursuit tactics, how to setup a perimeter, and when to call for backup or help. These conversations should also include a discussion of the basic tactical concepts of some of the most common radio calls, such as a robbery in progress, person with a gun, hot prowl, 415 gang group, residential or commercial burglary, and others. Officers should also be mindful to not restrict these discussions to only their partner, and should communicate with other officers on the watch when they have the opportunity. The more discussion that takes place amongst officers, the easier it will be to have a coordinated approach when officers are presented with a dynamic incident.

The last form of general planning is visualization. This is the least tangible form of planning but it is very important. Officers should visualize themselves in different situations on a regular basis. This is an effective way to mentally prepare for the rigors of police work.

Visualizing the steps required to handle various challenging scenarios can help officers make better decisions, faster, when confronted with those incidents. It can also help them keep their physiological responses under control during a stressful situation, because they have already been through it mentally many times.

Specific Planning

The next phase of planning is specific planning, which occurs shortly before an incident, and is directed to one specific incident. There are many forms of specific planning that officers should utilize, which include but are not limited to: discussing the comments of a radio call, communicating with other officers while enroute, communicating with the person reporting (PR) prior to arrival, requesting and confirming additional resources, and formal pre-incident briefings. All of these are forms of specific planning because they are focused on one incident and occur before, and leading up to, the incident.

Discussing the comments of the radio call while enroute is a basic, but vital element of specific planning. Despite not always being accurate, this is the first source of information officers have that is directly related to the incident they are about to handle. The passenger officer should read the comments to the driver, and they should begin to formulate a plan for resolving the incident. This may include a discussion about specific roles and responsibilities, characteristics of the location of the incident, the type of radio call, less lethal devices needed, other resources needed, and/or any specific experience or expertise each officer has with handling this type of incident. It should also include a discussion about the tactics leading up to the incident such as where to park, how to enter the location if it is known, or where to meet other officers if there are multiple units responding.

Specific planning may often involve officers communicating with other responding units in order to have a more coordinated approach to the scene. Depending on the type of radio call, officers may determine a location to meet to discuss further tactics. It could also be as simple as notifying other units where you are responding from and where you intend to enter the location. Some locations and radio calls may necessitate that officers pre-plan ingress and egress routes for responding units and other resources such as medical personnel. In some

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

cases it may be necessary to relay information to other units if certain officers have prior knowledge of the location or the suspect(s) involved. It is not uncommon for officers to have contact with a suspect or victim during one incident, and then other officers receive a radio call at the same location later that day, or even in subsequent days or weeks. Officers may modify their plan if they receive additional information from other officers who have previously responded to the location. Therefore, it is important for officers to share as much information as possible prior to their arrival at the scene.

Another element of specific planning is communicating with the PR while enroute. This can be done over the radio using the RTO, or by calling the PR directly if there is a callback phone number in the comments of the call. Since every police incident is different, and each is fluid and constantly evolving, it is important that officers receive as much accurate information as possible prior to their arrival. This can greatly influence the officers' plan and how they approach the scene. No ongoing police incident is stagnant, and officers should not simply categorize incidents by the title of the radio call, but rather should create a plan that is based on all of the information available to them at the time. Often times the PR is the best source of that information and can provide officers with new information such as an updated location of the suspect, the type of crime or weapons involved, or the location and well-being of potential victims at the scene. There will be many incidents in which contacting the PR will not be an option for a variety of reasons, but when possible, the PR can sometimes provide a wealth of information that will affect the officers' plan and approach.

After discussing tactics with their partner, reviewing the comments of the call, communicating with other responding units, and talking to the PR, officers will have as much information as possible to determine whether or not there is a need to request and confirm additional resources. These resources include additional units, an air unit, less lethal devices, a rescue ambulance, and many more. Anything that the officers know they will need upon arrival can be requested while they are enroute to the scene so that they can implement their plan with the utmost efficiency. Waiting for necessary resources to arrive could cost valuable time. Of course, it should be noted that each of these elements of specific planning takes time, and depending on the officers distance from the location when they received the radio call, or if the

incident was initiated as a citizen flag down, it may not be possible to complete these steps prior to their arrival. This is another reason why officers should be flexible with their plan in order to account for the resources they have available at the time.

Formal pre-incident briefings are another form of specific planning. These briefings occur in many different situations, including serving arrest warrants or search warrants, or conducting parole checks. The benefit of a formal briefing is that all the necessary resources can be planned for and staged ahead of time. The briefing itself is actually a dissemination of the plan that has already been created. Additionally, there is no time constraint on forming the plan, which can include many details such as specifics of the location and job assignments such as an entry team, arrest team, and cover officers to watch possible escape routes. These are luxuries that are usually not available to patrol officers responding to radio calls, but when the situation calls for a formal briefing it is important to take full advantage of the opportunity and ensure that the plan is complete and well communicated.

Fluid Planning

After general and specific planning, the next phase of the planning timeline is fluid planning. This is where planning and assessing meet. Everything that can be controlled prior to the officers' arrival at the scene has been discussed, but this can all change when they actually observe the scene and/or make contact with suspects, victims, or witnesses. The fluid planning phase occurs during the incident itself, in real time. As new information is received, the officers must be ready to adapt. Adaptation is at the heart of fluid planning. Tactical plans must be flexible and dynamic, and while their general and specific planning gives officers a huge advantage to safely and successfully de-escalate an incident, it is necessary that they are not too rigid in their execution of those plans. The officers' assessment of the scene, which will be discussed in further detail in another chapter, will invariably call for a fluid adaptation of the plan. This could mean requesting additional resources, cancelling responding resources, reassigning roles, modifying the approach, broadcasting a new ingress route for responding officers, updating the location over the radio, requesting backup or help, redeploying, setting up containment, and many other things. As the responding officers adapt to new information

they should be cognizant of communicating that information to other officers. Depending on the scale of the event this could mean talking to their partner, broadcasting information over the radio, or calling the incident commander on the phone. This will be discussed further in a later chapter on lines of communication. The key point is that the officers involved are coordinated and their actions are congruous and not working against one another.

Conclusion

Planning is the first step to successful de-escalation, and instructors should be diligent to encourage and facilitate the use of each of the three phases of the planning timeline during their training programs. Planning is an intentional action, and requires officers and supervisors to be proactive, disciplined, and hard working. The reward is that by creating and executing a flexible plan, officers and supervisors will be more successful in de-escalating tense and dynamic incidents in the field, and therefore will demonstrate a reverence for human life.

Chapter 3: Assessment

Introduction

Making assessments is something that trained police officers do naturally and constantly during every incident they respond to. A thorough assessment can help officers reduce the intensity of an incident by providing them with more information, which will ultimately lead to better decisions. When officers improve their decision making it shows their commitment to reverence for human life. If an officer fails to assess the scene, or makes an incomplete or incorrect assessment, it could cause them to make a poor decision or fail to capitalize on opportunities to mitigate the necessity of using force. There are many different elements of a thorough assessment and no two situations will be the same, meaning that officers must be able to adapt quickly to new information as it is received and adjust their plan accordingly. The broad categories that officers will most commonly need to assess during a tactical situation are:

- Location
- Suspect(s)
- Victim(s) and/or witnesses
- Available resources

Location

The assessment begins as the officers arrive and begin to take in information about the location. They will need to find the involved parties, and if necessary update their location over the radio. Officers should pay attention to as many details about the location as possible, such as the safest ingress and egress routes for responding officers and medical personnel, the surrounding homes or businesses, traffic conditions both pedestrian and vehicular, lookouts working for the suspect, gang graffiti in the vicinity, available cover and concealment nearby, lighting conditions and visibility, accessibility (locked gates, distance from patrol vehicle, etc.), the terrain, potential environmental hazards, pets or other animals nearby, escape routes for

the suspect, warning signs (e.g. “beware of dog”, etc.), or anything else that may help officers approach safely. Awareness, observation, and judgment are key factors to a thorough assessment of the scene. Officers should be aware of their surroundings, intentionally observe the location, and make judgments as information flows in. As officers assess they must be ready to modify their plan. This is a constant process. Information flows in, is judged in real time, and the plan is adjusted accordingly. This is why plans must be flexible, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Once the most obvious location factors have been assessed and accounted for, and depending on the type of radio call and the time available, officers should begin searching for evidence that may provide clues to the suspect’s whereabouts, the type of crime, and the level of violence involved. Some examples of this evidence are weapons nearby, broken glass or other items, drug paraphernalia, empty bottles of alcohol, and spots of blood.

If the incident is one in which there is a likelihood that it could escalate to the point where deadly force may be justified, the officers should identify and move to cover as soon as feasibly based on the totality of the circumstances. This requires a thorough assessment, as officers need to know the suspect’s location, the type of weapons involved, as well as what physical objects are in the vicinity that could provide the proper protective value and positional advantage relative to the suspect.

Suspect(s)

When officers make contact with a suspect they should immediately begin an assessment. Some of the suspect factors that they should consider are their size, weapons or other objects in their hands, clothing (including locations that weapons could be hidden), body language and pre-fight indicators, specific behavior and actions (e.g. in the act of committing a crime, fleeing, etc.), physiological responses (e.g. profuse sweating, erratic movement, etc.), evidence of violence (e.g. blood, visible injuries, etc.), what language they speak, and/or specific indicators of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Of these factors, one of the most important is the suspect’s display of pre-fight indicators. There are two types of pre-fight indicators, discernable and subtle. Discernable pre-fight indicators include but are not limited to: closing the distance, clenched fists, tightened

jaw/clenched teeth, and the use of expletives. Subtle pre-fight indicators include but are not limited to: a bladed stance, erratic head turning, avoiding eye contact, dilated pupils, verbal compression, widened eyes, unwarranted smiling, splaying of arms, and dropping of the chin. Each of these subtle pre-fight indicators can be assessed by careful observation and give clues as to the suspect's intentions. Suspects will usually display several of these indicators before fighting with officers, and if officers are observant, these indicators will act as early warning signs that the suspect is unsafe to approach. By discerning these indicators, officers may change their initial plan, modify their communication with the suspect, request resources, create distance, deploy less lethal devices, or utilize any other tactic which might aid their attempt to reduce the intensity of the encounter and mitigate the need to use a higher level of force.

Good communication, rapport building, and active listening are very important during the initial contact with the suspect. Lines of communication will be discussed in further detail in a later chapter, but these things certainly come in to play during the initial assessment of the suspect. By using active listening skills, officers can make a better initial assessment of the suspect's state of mind and what resources might be needed. As with every other element of assessment, once information is received it should be communicated to other officers involved and the plan should be adjusted as needed.

Victim(s) and/or Witnesses

Victims and/or witnesses should be another point of focus during officers' assessment. Upon contact with victims and witnesses officers should immediately begin assessing their behavior and listening closely to what they say. They should not assume that they already know the story, or categorize the incident based on the type of radio call. The information from the comments of the call, while very helpful, can sometimes be misleading or incorrect and the victims and witnesses on scene should be able to provide a clearer picture of the situation. Some things may be very obvious to officers when they make contact with victims, such as their specific statements (e.g. "I was stabbed" or "He is inside the house", etc.), visible injuries and blood, and other blatant clues. These things should be immediately assessed and the plan

adjusted accordingly, which should include communicating this information to other officers if necessary. Officers should also be aware of the behavior of witnesses and other people in the vicinity. They may appear shocked, or be screaming or running from the location. Conversely, they may act as if nothing has happened and be engaged in mundane chores. All of these things are pieces of the overall puzzle, which can help officers assess the situation. Once the most obvious factors have been assessed and accounted for, officers should begin looking for more subtle clues. This could mean initiating interviews with victims and witnesses to hear more of the story, checking for injuries that are not obvious at first sight, and identifying the relationships of the people involved.

Available Resources

Another piece of the officer's assessment is the available resources. The assessment of resources is something that should be happening throughout the incident, in real time. For example, just two officers may make contact with the suspect at first, but quickly other responding units arrive and two officers becomes six or eight plus a supervisor. Officers may not have a shotgun, rifle, or beanbag shotgun when they first make contact with the suspect, but then over time these resources arrive. Every available resource should be assessed and the plan adjusted accordingly. More officers will always be safer and may allow officers to make a different approach or use different tactics that they couldn't with less. As officers assess the scene they should be asking themselves if they currently have the resources they need to handle it, and if they are adequately equipped to handle it properly. If not, it may call for the plan to be changed. Officers may need to back out and request more resources, or wait until they arrive if already requested.

Conclusion

It is important to note that each step of the assessment is not separate from the others, and they do not necessarily happen in any specific order. These elements are in constant overlap. Officers may be assessing the location when they see the suspect and immediately switch to their assessment of him/her, or conversely the officers may be initiating contact with

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

a suspect when they observe possible escape routes, or environmental hazards nearby, and they divert their attention to communicate that information with other officers. There is not a specific checklist, or order of operations that officers must always follow when it comes to making an effective and thorough assessment.

The most essential detail with regard to an officer's assessment is that they understand how to act on the information they receive. It is of no use for officer's to be observant and make detailed assessments if it has no impact on their actions. They must modify and execute their plan in accordance with the information they are taking in through the assessment. They must be flexible and fluid and adapt to the situation as it changes. Additionally, if an officer is diligent to carefully assess the scene, but does not effectively communicate the results of the assessment with other officers, it nullifies his/her hard work in making that assessment. Other officers may fail to de-escalate properly simply because they didn't know vital information that would have helped them make better decisions. If the information is received and disseminated efficiently then all of the officers on scene have a higher chance of reducing the intensity of the encounter and preserving life.

Chapter 4: Time

Introduction

The tactical equation of distance plus cover equals time is a good starting point for officers when attempting to create time in order to de-escalate an incident. Directive No. 16 states, “Time is an essential element of de-escalation as it allows officers the opportunity to communicate with the suspect, refine tactical plans, and, if necessary, call for additional resources.” (Los Angeles Police Department, 2016) Said in another way, without time, officers cannot hope to effectively plan, assess, redeploy, call for resources, or communicate. If the incident escalates so quickly that officers must use force immediately, then thoughts of how to de-escalate become a moot point. Sometimes this will actually be the case despite the officers’ efforts because the suspect’s actions will force their hand and the officers will not have the time to use tactical de-escalation techniques. With that said, it is important for officers to understand how to create time, and to be aware of it, so that they do not needlessly rush into an incident that could have been de-escalated.

If officers can safely create time it may cause the suspect to lose the will to resist, or possibly to reconsider his/her actions. Time may also reduce the heated emotions of the incident and give the officers the opportunity to build a rapport with the suspect, offer alternative courses of action, and assemble resources that may aid in safely taking the suspect into custody. On the reverse side, a lack of time can cause both officers and the suspect to react emotionally and impulsively, which can lead to bad decisions by everyone involved.

As was discussed in earlier chapters, quality training can reduce the amount of time that officers need to make good decisions in tense encounters, but nevertheless it is always easier to make those decisions when they do not require split-second judgments. Ultimately, officers should seek to create time whenever safe and feasible during a tense and dynamic encounter with a suspect because it may facilitate the preservation of life.

Distance

The first element in the tactical time equation is distance. When making contact with a suspect, officers should use as much distance as is safe and feasible based on the nature of the encounter and the totality of the circumstances. Many practical hindrances will determine what that distance actually is for each incident, such as the exact location of the suspect, the layout of the structure or environment, the type of weapon the suspect has, the potential victims in the area, hazards such as traffic, falling dangers, or makeshift weapons nearby, the availability of cover or concealment, and many other factors. Each of these factors may limit the amount of distance officers can practically use. For example, officers may desire to keep 20+ feet of distance from any domestic violence suspect as those encounters can often lead to a use of force. But if they make contact with that suspect in a small, studio apartment that distance is simply not feasible. It would be unrealistic for those officers to then call for backup, surround the building, and use a megaphone to order the domestic violence suspect out of the location for an initial interview. The reality of police work in the real world is that it requires officers to adapt to myriad situations, each of which is unique, and to which they must apply the basic concepts of safe tactics, not a script that never changes.

In addition to those hindrances, there are other factors that officers may consider when determining how much distance they need such as the type of radio call and the initial demeanor of the suspect. Certain radio calls will naturally necessitate more distance and a cautious approach, such as a robbery in progress, man with a gun, or shots fired. Other radio calls, however, could actually be escalated by the officers utilizing too much distance, such as a loitering call, or a loud radio. If officers stopped their vehicle 40 feet from a loitering suspect and started giving commands using the PA system, it may do more harm than good. On the one hand the officers would be at a very safe distance and would have time on their side, but given the nature of the radio call it could actually cause the officers to lose rapport with the suspect and turn a benign incident into a more serious one by embarrassing and agitating the suspect needlessly.

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

Another factor to consider when determining the proper distance to utilize is the suspect's demeanor and the types of force options that may likely be used if the situation escalates to the point where force is necessary. For example, the officers' distance should correlate to the various types of weapons that the suspect may have. The distance should change if the suspect is unarmed, armed with a bottle, armed with a knife, armed with a handgun, armed with a rifle, or armed with explosives. Officers should also consider not only the weapons that the suspect currently has, but those that might be in close proximity. For example, officers might choose to keep more distance than usual from an unarmed suspect because of their immediate access to weapons. Alternatively, officers may choose to close the distance on an unarmed suspect in order to cut off their access to a certain area which could contain weapons, even when they had the ability to keep distance. Officers' distance should also correlate to the force options that they have available and might feasibly use. If they perceive that the use of the Taser is a likely end to the incident, then utilizing a distance of 40+ feet would be unwise as it would nullify their ability to effectively use a Taser. In the same way, if four officers formulated a plan to use a team takedown and began their approach from 40+ feet away it is likely the element of surprise would be lost, and the officers' ability to use a team takedown would be severely diminished. Each of these factors should be considered when choosing the best distance for the incident.

The discussion of proper distance does not only include keeping distance or creating more distance. Distance management is a core concept in self-defense, and sometimes necessitates that officers close the distance. This concept really comes into play when dealing with an unarmed, combative suspect. In a physical confrontation with an unarmed suspect, whoever manages the distance manages the damage that can be done. It is essential, therefore, that it is the officers who manage the distance and not the suspect. If the suspect throws punches and kicks, the officers must stay either outside of, or inside of, the suspect's effective striking range. Most often this means keeping distance and using a less lethal device if reasonable, however, in some circumstances it actually means closing the distance and using techniques such as body clinches and takedowns. For example, if a suspect spins and throws punches at an officer during a pat down search, it may not be feasible or safe for the officer to

backpedal and create distance. But at the same time it may not be safe for the officer to stay in the suspect's effective striking range and essentially engage in a boxing match. It is also not safe for the officer to turn around, give up their back, and run away. This leaves the option of closing the distance, or moving inside of the suspect's effective striking range, and utilizing a takedown, as the safest option. In this way, officers can use the ground as a controlling agent to take the suspect into custody, and they can do so without needing to use a higher level of force that may cause more injury. Any time that officers can mitigate the need to use a higher level of force they are showing a reverence for human life and they are effectively de-escalating.

Cover

The next element in the tactical time equation is cover. Often times cover is defined as any object that is believed to be capable of stopping of a bullet. This definition is true, however, it can be expanded to include anything that gives an officer protective value from the weapon that a suspect is confronting them with. For example, if the a suspect is armed with a gun, cover may include large trees, block walls, the engine block of parked cars, telephone poles, buildings, or any other structure solid enough to stop a bullet. If the suspect is armed with a machete, cover may include a chain link fence, glass window or door, or a tall hedge. Cover should not be confused with concealment, which is any object that will hide the officer from view, but which does not necessarily provide any protective value. Objects that provide cover may sometimes also overlap with those that provide concealment. For example, a thick block wall may provide both cover and concealment. Finding good cover will keep officers significantly safer from the threat of serious bodily injury or death.

Conclusion

Time allows officers to make sound judgments, refine tactical plans, and assemble resources. An emotional and impulsive suspect may do something drastic and violent simply because the opportunity presents itself. If officers can reduce that opportunity by creating

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

distance, and finding good cover, they may be able to mitigate the necessity to use a higher level of force, and possibly even preserve life.

Chapter 5: Redeployment and/or Containment

Introduction

Redeployment refers to officers moving to a new location in order to increase their tactical advantage and give them a better opportunity to assess, communicate, request additional resources, or deploy other tactics to reduce the likelihood of injury to both the public and officers while also mitigating any potential ongoing threats. Redeployment is dependent upon, and used in conjunction with, containment. Containment refers to officers controlling a scene by limiting a suspect's movement to a specific area where they can maintain some degree of contact or observation and prepare for the suspect's later arrest. Containment also includes officers controlling a scene by preventing people from moving between the officers and the suspect. Redeployment and/or containment may help officers mitigate the level of force necessary to take the suspect into custody. In this way, when it is tactically viable to do so, redeployment and/or containment is another technique that officers can use to de-escalate a tense encounter.

Redeployment

Redeployment should only be utilized when it gives officers a tactical advantage. Because the act of moving itself increases the complexity of the situation, it should only be done when a clear tactical advantage is presented by the new location. Examples of this advantage are better cover or concealment, a better view of the suspect, increased safety from the suspect's weapon(s), an increased ability to render aid or rescue victims, the ability to cut off the suspect's access to weapons or further victims, a safer avenue of approach for arrest procedures, better communication with other officers or with the suspect, increased availability of less lethal force options, increased safety from environmental hazards, better crowd control, and many others. Every tactical situation is different and officers' decision to redeploy should be based on the set of facts and the totality of the circumstances that they are presented with

at the time. Officers' should weigh the tactical advantage of redeployment against any advantage that their movement might give the suspect. They should consider whether or not their movement would allow the suspect a better opportunity to arm himself/herself, flee, or pose a greater danger to officers or the public. If there is no clear tactical advantage then officers should not redeploy, as the act of moving may disrupt the plan that has already been formed.

It is important to note that redeployment means moving, but it does not necessarily mean gaining distance. Moving in any direction is redeployment when it is done to gain a tactical advantage. Sometimes this may mean closing the distance, for example, to utilize better cover, or to get within range for a specific less lethal device. Officers should be aware that during a tactical situation that has the likelihood of escalating to the point where deadly force would be justified, officers deploying a less lethal device should have a cover officer as lethal cover moving with them during their redeployment.

Redeployment also requires officers to communicate with the other officers involved, which again increases the complexity of the situation. As was discussed in a previous chapter, the plan must be fluid, and as changes are made they must be re-communicated as necessary. If officers decide to redeploy, they should create and communicate a new plan. The previous plan should be adjusted, and the new plan disseminated to the officers affected. In many circumstances it may not be a viable option for every officer to communicate every redeployment to all officers involved in a fluid tactical situation. Sometimes officers may need to redeploy quickly and they may not have the time necessary to communicate in the moment. Officers should always weigh the benefit of the redeployment against the potential risks and make their decision based on the totality of the circumstances.

The air unit can be a helpful resource in determining the possible advantages of redeployment and officers should consider communicating their plan to them prior to execution. The air unit's vantage point may give them a better ability to see the best locations for redeployment, and determine whether or not it is necessary and advantageous. In some circumstances, the air unit may initiate recommending units to redeploy and this recommendation should weigh heavily in the officers' decision.

Containment

Officers may choose to use containment of the suspect when they have the ability to control and limit the suspect's movement within a specified area, and the containment gives them a clear tactical advantage. Containment is another technique that officers can use to create time. As was discussed in the previous chapter, time can help officers reduce the intensity of an encounter with a suspect and allow them to re-assess, create a plan, assemble resources, and ultimately may help mitigate the need to use a higher level of force. For example, if officers responded to a radio call of a male with mental illness inside a house, and during their assessment they discovered that the man was alone and armed with a knife, they could choose to use containment to de-escalate the incident. Because the man is contained within a controlled area, in this case the house, has not committed a crime, and there are no other possible victims nearby, the benefit of using containment and waiting for specialized resources, such as qualified negotiators, outweighs the risk that he may harm himself and any possible benefit of entering quickly. There is a higher probability of a use of force occurring if officers quickly enter the location and make contact with a man with mental illness holding a knife. As with redeployment, if using containment gives the suspect a tactical advantage it should not be used. Some situations may require a more active approach, and containment may not be the best option.

Officers should also consider utilizing the air unit whenever possible during a containment situation. The elevated vantage point of the air unit gives them the ability to assess the full scope of the containment and make recommendations regarding its viability.

In most situations, officers should not utilize redeployment until they have established containment. Containment therefore, is a prerequisite for redeployment in most circumstances. If redeploying would put bystanders between the officers and the suspect, and therefore increase the likelihood of additional victims, officers should not redeploy. First, the officers should seek to control the scene, move potential victims to a place of safety, prevent potential victims from entering the scene, and then choose the best location for redeployment, if necessary. In this way, officers can use containment to provide a tactical advantage, without

putting others in harm's way. As with all tactical de-escalation techniques, reverence for human life is a key element of containment, and controlling the scene and the suspect is one way to facilitate preserving life.

Conclusion

Ultimately it is the incident commander and the officers on the ground who must make the decision to use redeployment and/or containment, and it should be based on the totality of the circumstances. Officers should use these techniques if they determine that it would give them a tactical advantage, reduce the intensity of the encounter, and possibly mitigate the need to use a higher level of force.

Chapter 6: Other Resources

Introduction

Requesting additional resources has been mentioned many times throughout this guide. In previous chapters many of the most common resources have been discussed, such as additional units and officers, less lethal devices, air units, calling the PR for additional information, and medical services. Depending on the situation, there are many other less common resources that officers should consider. Using additional resources may help officers reduce the intensity of the encounter and could ultimately help them mitigate the need to use a higher level of force. Some of the other resources that officers should consider utilizing are:

- LAPD's specialized units
- Outside law enforcement agencies or other government agencies
- Technology
- Known contacts/family of the suspect

A reverence for human life is always the guiding principle and officers should not attempt to handle a situation on their own if waiting for specialized resources could facilitate the preservation of life. Some circumstances allow officers the time and opportunity to request and wait for these resources and officers should be cognizant of the different aids that are available to them when dealing with a complex tactical situation.

Specialized Units

LAPD's specialized units include the Mental Evaluation Unit, Crisis Negotiating Team, SWAT team, K-9 units, bomb squad, HAZMAT, and dive unit. Each of these serves a very specific and specialized purpose and can be called upon when the tactical situation requires additional help. Officers should not hesitate to request the help they need if a specialized unit could provide the additional services necessary to safely resolve the situation. These units can provide a level of expertise and specialized equipment that far exceeds that of a patrol officer's.

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

Officers should never let ego, or even a virtuous desire to help, impede their decision to request a specialized unit, and possibly even turn the scene over to them.

Outside Agencies

Officers may also need to communicate with outside agencies during a complex tactical situation. Sometimes outside agencies may be able to provide information or resources not available to LAPD officers. Depending on the scale of the incident they may also provide the additional personnel needed to control the incident.

In some situations, other government agencies, such as the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) or Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) may need to be requested for specialized help. LADOT can provide traffic control and can modify and repair traffic signals. LADWP can be called to make a scene safe if there are downed power lines, or if it is necessary to turn power on or off in a certain area. These would be somewhat rare incidents, but officers should be aware of the resources available to them nonetheless.

Technology

If time and opportunity permit, officers should use any technology and computer programs available. Officers can call RACR Division to ping a cell phone in order to narrow down the location of a suspect. They may also use computer programs that can provide additional information about the suspect. Officers can utilize their MDC to retrieve a criminal history, Blue Check, CCHRS, CalGangs, Parole LEADS, MEU history, and others. If officers can acquire more information about the suspect's past behavior it can help them create a better plan and make sound judgments and decisions. Other technology, such as using social media in real time to aid investigations, may also be available to officers.

Suspect's Known Contacts/Family

Finally, officers should consider utilizing other resources such as the family or known contacts of the suspect. Depending on the situation and if time permits, officers may be able to acquire information from people close to the suspect. This could give them information such as

what weapons the suspect has access to, the layout of the suspect's location, temperament and mental history, and background information leading up to the incident in question. All of this information is a form of assessment and can aid officers in making and executing their plan. As was discussed in a previous chapter, as new information is received, officers must be ready to adapt and modify their plan accordingly.

Conclusion

There are many other less common resources that officer's may have access to in the line of duty and which go beyond the scope of this guide. Officers should always be aware of any resources or tools they can use to preserve life and mitigate the need to use force.

Chapter 7: Lines of Communication

Introduction

The last de-escalation technique, but one that has been woven through all of the others, is lines of communication. Nearly every chapter in this resource guide has addressed lines of communication in some way, because it is so important to effective de-escalation, and is one of the most effective tools for developing public trust. While there may be infinite levels of communication that officers could utilize in a tactical situation, this guide will focus on the most common. These essential lines of communication are:

- Radio communications
- Officer to officer communications
- Subject/suspect communications
- Victim/witness communications

Verbal de-escalation is unlike other forms of communication that officers employ. For example, there are precise words that are expected when broadcasting (e.g., Code 6 location) and officers rely on clarity and specificity when communicating with each other during a tactical situation (e.g., Presence of Weapons). In verbal de-escalation there are shades of gray when referring to dialogue or other techniques that are geared toward verbally calming a subject, and what works for one officer may not fit the style or personality of another. Therefore, it is important for officers to be knowledgeable about the over-arching principles and strategies as they experiment with new techniques. Different officers may take a different route and yet end up at the same destination; a situation that is de-escalated using verbal strategies.

Radio Communication

Depending on how the incident initiated, the first line of communication is over the radio. Officers should use their radio to contact Communications Division and request as much

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

initial information as possible, and then disseminate essential details quickly. As was discussed in a previous chapter, officers can communicate with the RTO while enroute to a call for service, and ask for additional resources such as an air unit or rescue ambulance, or additional information from the PR. When they arrive at the scene, officers must go Code 6 so that Communications Division and other officers know that they are at scene. Sometimes it can provide a tactical advantage to go Code 6 over the radio so that the other officers on the watch hear the broadcast. Officers may also use their radio to request backup or help, give a crime a broadcast, or broadcast supplemental information to responding units such as the best ingress route or a more specific location. The scope of radio broadcasts is widespread, and therefore can be one of the best tools to inform many officers at once about the details of the situation. Radio broadcasts are repeated by the RTO, which helps the other officers involved receive the correct information. Using the radio is also one of the easiest methods of communicating because officers always have it with them and it is effective over long distances and out of the line of sight of other officers.

Officer to Officer Communication

Officer to officer communication can be used to disseminate information, form tactical plans, and keep other officers apprised of developments in the incident. Officers should maintain an open line of communication with additional units and supervisors whenever possible, either over the radio using the RTO, using simplex or a tac channel, or in person, using face to face communication or hand signals. Depending on the size and scope of the incident, the primary unit may be able to meet with responding officers in person to create and disseminate the tactical plan before taking action. When not able to meet in person the use of simplex or a tac channel can be helpful to efficiently communicate with other officers at the scene, without tying up the division's radio channel. As Directive No. 16 states, "communication between officers can improve decision-making under tense circumstances and increase the effectiveness of coordinated actions." (Los Angeles Police Department, 2016) In the earlier chapter on planning, nearly every phase of planning included some form of officers communicating with one another. This communication is an essential detail of responding with

a coordinated approach. Another form of communication between officers is the use of hand signals. In some circumstances, particularly when the element of surprise is needed, officers within sight of each other can use hand signals to communicate their intended movement, the suspect location, or other information that is important to officer safety. If using hand signals, the primary officer running the incident should ensure that supporting officers know the hand signals they intend to use.

Communications with the incident commander in a large scale incident with an established command post is vital. Officers in the field are responsible for keeping the incident commander apprised of the latest information and development of the incident. This can be done over the radio, but often times may be easier by using a cell phone and calling the incident commander or other contacts at the command post directly. In order for the incident commander to make sound decisions, they must have the most accurate and up to date information possible. Likewise, the incident commander must ensure officers in the field are kept apprised of tactical decisions so that the officers are not surprised by tactical movement, less lethal deployment, etc. These communication skills can help to ensure that the situation is handled in the safest manner possible.

Subject/Suspect Communication

Communication with the subject/suspect is important when attempting to de-escalate a tense situation. Officers should utilize purposeful communication skills that show empathy and help build rapport. Current Department training reinforces Tactical Communication skills with the crisis communication acronym LEAPS, which can help simplify communication with a suspect during a tense encounter. LEAPS stands for: listen, empathize, ask, paraphrase, and summarize. Using these skills will demonstrate an understanding of the person they are trying to communicate with. Purposeful communication with the subject is at the core of high-quality tactical de-escalation. Demonstrating a range of human contact can sometimes be more effective in gaining compliance than any force option.

The first of these skills, active listening, is very extensive, and it is outside the scope of this resource guide to thoroughly explore each of the elements of this skill. Some of the

specific active listening skills that officers should utilize are clarifying, reflecting, emotional labeling, asking open ended questions, and reinforcing. Using these communication skills will communicate empathy and build trust. However, officers must ensure that they never become complacent and falsely believe that good communication is foolproof. Officers will inevitably encounter suspects that do not respond well to even the best communicators and officers must always be ready to use reasonable force options if necessary based on the set of facts and totality of the circumstances that they are facing.

If officers are struggling to establish a rapport or communicate effectively with the suspect, they should attempt to decipher the reasons why and adapt accordingly. Distance, language barriers, mixed messages from too many officers attempting to communicate at the same time, cultural stigmas toward certain officers, and hearing impairment can all play a role in breaking down communication. Officers should be cognizant of these potential struggles and be ready to modify their plan and use their available resources to improve communication with the suspect in any way possible. As Directive No. 16 states, “when a suspect observes that officers are prepared, well organized, professional, and working as a team, he or she may be deterred from attempting to flee, fight, or actively resist.” (Los Angeles Police Department, 2016)

Victim/Witness Communication

The next essential line of communication is with victims and witnesses. As was discussed in an earlier chapter, victims and witnesses can be one of officers’ best sources of accurate and up to the minute information about the incident. The same communication skills that officers should use for suspects can be utilized to build a rapport with victims and witnesses. Officers should not assume that victims and witnesses will tell them everything they know of their own volition, and should use open ended questions to extract as much pertinent information as possible. The use of open ended questions is generally more effective than the simple questions that result in a “yes/no” response. By building rapport and demonstrating empathy, officers can quickly build trust and obtain important information regarding the crime they are investigating. In many cases officers encounter community members who are

reluctant to speak to officers due to fear of the police and/or fear of becoming the target of the suspect. In other incidents, witnesses and other bystanders can actually be part of the problem and it may be necessary to use communication skills, crowd control tactics, or even dispersal orders, to control them and move them from an area.

Conclusion

There are many other less common lines of communication such as other specialized entities within the LAPD, outside agencies, and many more, that officers can and should utilize when necessary. Communication is our number one skill, used every day by every officer, of every rank. By putting good communication skills to practice, officers can potentially reduce the intensity of the encounter and mitigate the level of force necessary to safely resolve the situation. Good communication, therefore, is another vital component to building public trust and preserving life.

Chapter 8: Debriefing

Introduction

Debriefing is a vital component to both officers in the field, and course designers and instructors. For that reason it is included in this guide to help instructors develop these skills in their students and themselves. While it is not specifically a technique for tactical de-escalation, quality debriefing can nonetheless enhance officers' skills in future incidents requiring de-escalation. Debriefing is essentially an evaluation that should include identifying successful tactics and strategies, lost opportunities, and lessons learned. There are two distinct variations of debriefing that this guide will address:

- Officers debriefing incidents in the field
- Instructors debriefing role-play scenarios

Officers Debriefing Incidents in the Field

Debriefing refers to the concept of officers discussing and evaluating an incident after the fact. Debriefing can also be thought of as lessons learned. Officers should form a habit of debriefing as many incidents as possible, and should specifically include the elements of tactical de-escalation as talking points in their discussions. Debriefing occurs after the incident is resolved, but is not necessarily restricted to the timeframe immediately after an incident. Even though a debrief occurs after the event has ended, it can help officers develop future plans because what is learned from one incident will invariably impact how the next one is handled.

A debrief can be casual and informal, such as partners talking about a radio call in the car after they leave the location, or formal, such as an incident commander leading a prepared, detailed debrief of a major incident, or a captain reviewing a categorical use of force with the officers involved. The more that officers talk to each other openly about what worked and what didn't, the more prepared they will be for the next incident. Debriefing helps officers refine their craft, work together more efficiently, and coordinate more effectively in the future.

Sometimes officers may be reluctant to debrief an incident because of egos or a fear of hurting others feelings, but if they make it a habit it will become a regular part of their duties and will make them a better police officer.

Instructors Debriefing Role-Play Scenarios

One of the most effective ways to transfer knowledge, skills, and attitude to students is through the use of reality-based role-play scenarios. The debrief of these scenarios is a detailed breakdown of what happened, which should minimally include a discussion about the circumstances the officers faced, the choices they made, the outcomes of the scenario, and the takeaways, or lessons learned. Well planned, quality training scenarios can be the closest thing that officers experience to reality. Officers cannot be expected to have a coordinated approach, control physiological responses, and act with prudence and sound judgment if they have not been properly trained. Role-play scenarios are one tool that course designers, instructors, and other training personnel can use to provide the best training possible. With that in mind, training personnel must know how to properly debrief a role-play scenario in order to maximize the effectiveness of the training.

This guide includes exemplar role-play scenarios, as well as debrief sheets to aid instructors during their training. These debrief sheets lay out some of the foundational questions that instructors should be asking at the end of each role-play scenario that they facilitate. These are simple, open ended, critical thinking questions. The instructors should develop their skills in asking follow-up questions to force students to think more critically about the training scenarios. The more that the instructor can challenge the students during training, and force them to clearly articulate the elements of de-escalation, as well as the suspect's actions and their response, the more prepared they will be for field duty.

Conclusion

Like anything else, debriefing is a skill that is perishable. Officers in the field should make it a priority to discuss incidents in detail whenever they have the opportunity, and instructors should continually hone their skills in debriefing training exercises. By practicing

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

debriefing in both of these forms, officers will be more prepared to successfully use tactical de-escalation techniques when necessary, and this may eventually lead to the preservation of life.

Chapter 9: Facilitation Questions

Planning

What are some of the ways that you can plan before, during, and after a tactical situation?

This is a general question designed to start the conversation about planning with the students. The intent is to generate a lot of ideas, which can be narrowed down and picked apart with follow-up questions later on. Instructors should allow the students the time needed to think through the many facets of planning, and should encourage them to go beyond the basic, rote answers such as, “Talk to your partner about who is contact and who is cover.” Additionally, instructors should be aware of addressing content related to fluid planning that happens in real-time during a tactical incident. This question should evoke answers about adapting to dynamic situations.

Why is it so important to plan?

This is another very general question that naturally follows the “what” question and moves students into thinking critically about the importance of planning and how it effects police work. After receiving the students’ initial answers, instructors should let this question sit for several seconds and allow the students time to go deeper with their thoughts. It may take them longer to formulate and articulate clear answers to this question and it is important that instructors do not give them an “out” by answering the question for them too soon.

What are some of the potential consequences of not planning?

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

This question is a natural follow-up and possibly could overlap the previous “why” question. If the students are struggling to go deep in answering the “why” question, it might help to direct their thinking towards the consequences of not planning. This question should evoke both practical consequences related to the situation, and emotional consequences. Additionally, the instructor should direct students to address consequences from multiple points of view, such as the officers involved, the department, the suspect(s), the victim(s), and the people of Los Angeles.

What are the three phases of planning? Describe each of them and discuss how they are different, and where they fit on the planning timeline.

This resource guide outlines four distinct phases of planning: general planning, specific planning, and fluid planning. Officers should know each of these and be able to describe them and discuss why each phase is important. Follow-up questions may include asking students to identify which they think is the most important and why. This will force them to think about each phase, rank them, and choose one, which takes them into deeper thought. There is not necessarily any right or wrong answer in choosing which is the most important; the question is more about getting the students to think about each phase in more complex ways.

How does planning demonstrate a reverence for human life?

This is an essential question that should be asked in various forms throughout tactical de-escalation training. This question seeks to target the affective domain and get students to think beyond just the tactical concepts of de-escalation and move them to evaluate their mission, vision, and values. It is of the highest importance that students leave any tactical de-escalation training believing that these techniques will help them safeguard and preserve lives.

Assessment

What is the purpose of a thorough assessment?

This is an introductory question to the topic of assessment that will get students thinking not only about the definition of an assessment but its place in de-escalation. By asking what the “purpose” is, students will have to first think about what it is, and then think deeper how a thorough assessment serves a specific purpose.

When should officers assess?

Throughout the assessment chapter there are several different times, or clear opportunities, identified for officers to assess. This question probes the students’ understanding of the various times that officers should be aware of conducting an assessment.

What should officers assess? Or, list ten things that officers should assess.

This is a broad question that seeks to get students brainstorming a general list of the myriad aspects of a thorough assessment. It can be asked as the general “what” question, or instructors can challenge students to list a certain number of things to discourage laziness. If the students are engaging and coming up with many answers on their own this may not be necessary. But if the students seem content to give just one or two answers, then time permitting, the instructor may ask the students to list five, seven, or even ten things to challenge them.

How should officers use the information they receive from their assessment?

This is an action oriented question seeking to get the students to think critically about how their assessment would actually modify their plan. Instructors should guide students towards action

or task-oriented answers. Time permitting, instructors may choose to give brief examples of assessments here and ask the students how they would use that information in a tactical situation.

What are some of the consequences of failing to do a thorough assessment?

Part of getting “buy-in” from students during training is to occasionally bring the course content back to the potential consequences of failing. If the students do not understand the problem, they will not value the solution. Asking the students to identify consequences helps do just that; it solidifies the problem in their minds, and therefore increases the value of the solution. Students may have a tendency to under-value the importance of the assessment, as it is a rather ubiquitous and mundane task for seasoned police officers. This question can help bring value to the training by considering the consequences of failure.

How does a thorough assessment demonstrate a reverence for human life?

This is an essential question that should be asked in various forms throughout tactical de-escalation training. This question seeks to target the affective domain and get students to think beyond just the tactical concepts of de-escalation and move them to evaluate their mission, vision, and values. It is of the highest importance that students leave any tactical de-escalation training believing that these techniques will help them safeguard and preserve lives.

Time

What is the tactical time equation? What does it mean?

This chapter begins with a discussion of the equation distance + cover = time. This a good starting point for facilitation of this chapter because the students will be familiar with this equation. It is always helpful if the instructor can use a simple question as a starting point to draw out a lot of information from the students. This is that type of question. It is simple, but the follow-up questions about distance and cover are numerous, making this a perfect launching pad to start a discussion about time as a de-escalation technique.

Why is creating time so important? What does it allow officers to do?

After discussing the “what” of the time equation, it follows that the instructor should ask the why question. The students need to understand and internalize the importance of creating time. What can officers do that they could not if they were not diligent to create time? This is also a good question because it can get to the heart of de-escalation and reducing the intensity of the incident.

What are some of the important factors to consider with regard to creating distance? When would it be unrealistic or even inappropriate or unsafe to create distance?

The concept of police officers creating distance is a complex one, and there is room for a lot of discussion here. These questions could really benefit from the use of video case studies, wherein students can evaluate the officers’ actions. These questions will help students explore the gamut of distance management concepts and help them to think critically about various scenarios they may encounter in the field. Follow-up questions should elicit details such as suspect behaviors and demeanor, pre-fight indicators, and hindrances to creating distance.

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

What are some specific and common examples of good cover? What is the difference in cover and concealment?

This is a fairly basic and straightforward question that seeks to list various types of good cover and may help officers be more cognizant of what to look for in a tactical situation.

How does creating time demonstrate a reverence for human life?

This is an essential question that should be asked in various forms throughout tactical de-escalation training. This question seeks to target the affective domain and get students to think beyond just the tactical concepts of de-escalation and move them to evaluate their mission, vision, and values. It is of the highest importance that students leave any tactical de-escalation training believing that these techniques will help them safeguard and preserve lives.

Redeployment and/or Containment

What is redeployment and how can it give officers a tactical advantage?

Depending on the training and experience of the students, this question may be all that is needed to explore the concept of redeployment. By not only asking for a definition, but also asking for the students to discuss the tactical advantage, most of the content from the redeployment chapter can be covered. If the students are recruits or otherwise do not have much field experience, some specific follow-up or leading questions may be needed to draw out the information. Instructors should ensure that their students understand that redeployment does not necessarily mean gaining distance, but can be movement in any direction, including forward.

What is containment and how can it give officers a tactical advantage?

This is another definition question to start the discussion about containment and to get students thinking about why it is an important part of de-escalation. The instructor should be ready to ask follow-up questions if the students are struggling to go beyond the definition. The goal is for the instructor to elicit critical thinking from the students and not regurgitation.

What are some of the resources that officers can use to aid their containment of a suspect?

This question is seeking the specific resources such as additional units and an air unit. The instructor may ask follow-up questions regarding the dangers of attempting containment without the necessary resources.

How are redeployment and containment related?

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

Instructors should ensure that their students understand that even if redeployment gains a tactical advantage for them personally, it may not be an option if it unnecessarily places other persons at greater risk by positioning them between the officers and the suspect.

What factors should officers weigh when deciding whether or not to use redeployment and/or containment?

Understanding when to use these techniques is one of the most important aspects of redeployment and/or containment. Instructors must ensure that the students leave training with an understanding that the use of these techniques must provide a tactical advantage, should *not* give the suspect a tactical advantage, and that the benefit should outweigh the risks. Students need to understand that there is a balance test with regard to using these techniques, and this question is designed to explore the factors that the students should weigh in their decision making process.

How can redeployment and/or containment demonstrate a reverence for human life?

This is an essential question that should be asked in various forms throughout tactical de-escalation training. This question seeks to target the affective domain and get students to think beyond just the tactical concepts of de-escalation and move them to evaluate their mission, vision, and values. It is of the highest importance that students leave any tactical de-escalation training believing that these techniques will help them safeguard and preserve lives.

Other Resources

List some of the other resources that officers have available to them in the field?

This is an introductory question to brainstorm the various resources that officers can call upon during a tense tactical incident. Each answer can be followed up with further discussion about that resource if time permits.

When should officers consider using these resources?

It is of no help if the students know what resources are available, but cannot conceptualize when to request those resources in the field. This question will inevitably include many real life examples, and the instructor should draw on the experience of the students in the classroom to tell their stories about when they had to utilize some of these resources. Additionally, this question may benefit from the use of video case studies.

How can using other resources demonstrate a reverence for human life?

This is an essential question that should be asked in various forms throughout tactical de-escalation training. This question seeks to target the affective domain and get students to think beyond just the tactical concepts of de-escalation and move them to evaluate their mission, vision, and values. It is of the highest importance that students leave any tactical de-escalation training believing that these techniques will help them safeguard and preserve lives.

Lines of Communication

What are the most important lines of communication? Why are these so important?

This resource guide identifies some specific lines of communication that are of high importance. While the list of lines of communication is nearly endless, there are some that are essential to effective police work and quality tactical de-escalation. These essential lines of communication are: the RTO, other officers, the suspect, victims and witnesses, and the incident commander. The instructor should facilitate a discussion about what they are and why they are important. It is totally acceptable if the students identify other lines of communication at this point and time-permitting the instructor should allow the students to explore those as well.

What is arguably the most important line of communication with regard to de-escalation?

This question is seeking for students to answer that communication with the suspect is the most important. Communicating with the suspect is at the heart of tactical de-escalation and as much as any other technique shows a reverence for human life. If the students do not agree that it is the most important, the instructor should use that opportunity to get the students engaged in discussion that compares and contrasts the various lines of communication. It is not necessary that the students all agree, and just getting them to think critically about the topic is of great value. This is another question that could benefit greatly from the use of video case studies, wherein the students can evaluate officers' communication with suspects.

What are some purposeful communication skills? Which do you think is the most important and why?

Some of these skills are: active listening, giving undivided attention, persuasion, defusing, redirecting, questioning, assertiveness, confrontation, challenging, and responding with understanding. By asking the students to choose which they think is the most important the

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

instructor can reach deeper levels of critical thinking. This question forces students to think about all of the skills, categorize them, and then select one as the most important.

What are some specific active listening skills? Which do you think is the most important and why? Which skill are you best at? Which do you need the most work improving?

Some of the specific active listening skills that officers should utilize are paraphrasing, clarifying, reflecting, emotional labeling, asking open ended questions, and reinforcing. By asking the students to choose which they think is the most important the instructor can reach deeper levels of critical thinking. This question forces students to think about all of the skills, categorize them, and then select one as the most important. If time permits, it could be very profitable training for the instructor to explore which skills the students feel they are best at and which they need the most help improving. This may even provide insight into which skills to focus on later in the training.

How can using good communication skills demonstrate a reverence for human life?

This is an essential question that should be asked in various forms throughout tactical de-escalation training. This question seeks to target the affective domain and get students to think beyond just the tactical concepts of de-escalation and move them to evaluate their mission, vision, and values. It is of the highest importance that students leave any tactical de-escalation training believing that these techniques will help them safeguard and preserve lives.

Chapter 10: Role-Play Scenario Exemplars

Man with a Knife Radio Call

Variation #1:

The suspect will be pacing with the knife at his side. Officers will utilize de-escalation strategies and communication techniques to diffuse the situation with no use of force. If the officers use proper de-escalation strategies and do not give opportunity for the suspect to attack, then the suspect should eventually obey the commands. If the officers use very poor tactics, the suspect may need to escalate the scenario, however, in this first variation it should not escalate to the use of deadly force.

Variation #2:

In this variation the radio call will be the same, but the suspect will not have the knife. The suspect should not follow the officers commands and should act upset and angry about being stopped, but without closing the distance. After engaging the officers verbally for a minute, the suspect should tell the officers he is leaving, and walk away from the location. If the officers ever choose to put hands on, the suspect will comply and be taken into custody without incident. The suspect will attempt to actually get away from the officers, but without actually running. The debrief can include a discussion of the limitations of de-escalation and get the students to think critically about various acceptable conclusions to this type of scenario.

Debrief questions:

- What was your plan?

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Los Angeles Police Department

- What did you observe when you arrived?
- What did you observe when you made contact with the suspect?
- How did you alter your plan as a result of your assessment? Why?
- What actions did you take and how did those actions demonstrate a reverence for human life?

Loud Music Radio Call

Variation 1:

Officers will door knock the location and attempt to communicate with the suspect. The suspect will immediately become angry and verbally abusive, but will not engage in a fight with the officers. The suspect will refuse to turn the music down and attempt to close the door on the officers. The suspect should attempt to distract the officers from the issue of the loud music and attempt to incite them to anger. If the officers utilize proper de-escalation strategies, the suspect will eventually comply.

Variation 2:

Officers will door knock the location and attempt to communicate with the suspect. The suspect will immediately become angry and verbally abusive, and will close the distance on the officers very slowly while arguing with the officers. It should not be so overt that the officers must use force immediately. They should be given enough time to possibly get distance, redeploy, and call for backup. If the officers utilize proper de-escalation strategies, the suspect will eventually comply without a use of force.

Variation 3:

Officers will door knock the location and attempt to communicate with the suspect. The suspect will turn down the music as requested, and then quickly become angry and verbally abusive with the officers. The suspect will act irate over being asked to turn the music down and will try to escalate the situation verbally, but will not escalate to the point where the officers must use force. The suspect will attempt to bait the officers into escalating, and will force them to think critically to de-escalate the situation. The debrief should focus on a

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Los Angeles Police Department

discussion of how this scenario is different since the suspect actually obeyed the officers orders. It is very important that the suspect does not give the officers a reason to use force.

Debrief questions:

- What was your plan?
- What did you observe when you arrived?
- What did you observe when you made contact with the suspect?
- How did you alter your plan as a result of your assessment? Why?
- What actions did you take and how did those actions demonstrate a reverence for human life?

415 Gang Group Radio Call

Variation 1:

The suspects will be singing and talking loudly when the officers make contact with them. If props are available for the scenario, some of suspects will have bottles of alcohol. When the officers make contact, all of the suspects will belligerently ignore their commands and curse at them, telling them to leave them alone. As the officers persist in making contact, the suspects will state that they are not breaking the law and will become angrier and more hostile. The suspects should allow this to continue for a minute or two, giving the officers time to think about what they plan to do next.

After a minute or two one of the suspects will emerge from the crowd as the aggressor and will begin to close the distance on the officers while also challenging them to fight. At some point this suspect will force the officers to use force. The suspect will engage the officers in a fight and resist their attempts to take him into custody. During this time, the other suspects will continue to yell belligerently at the officers and get close to them, but they will not engage in the fight at this point.

If the officers previously called for backup then the scenario manager should now allow the backup officers to enter the scenario. When the backup officers arrive the additional suspects should attempt to distract them and engage them, but will not force them into a use of force. After a few seconds a second set of backup officers will be sent in, and a few seconds after that another pair of officers. There should be approximately 8 officers at this point. The suspect should still be resisting arrest and doing everything they can safely do to prevent the officers from being able to place them in handcuffs. The additional suspects should attempt to create chaos for the responding officers.

Once the suspect is in custody the officers will decide what to do about the additional suspects from the 415 group, depending on what happened during the scenario. If the officers allow their ego and emotions to get away from them, one of these suspects may choose to escalate the scenario to another use of force. However, in this first scenario it is ideal if there is

only one use of force. The additional suspects should only escalate it if the officers really fail to use any de-escalation strategies.

Variation 2:

The suspects will be singing and talking loudly when the officers make contact with them. If props are available for the scenario, some of suspects will have bottles of alcohol. When the officers make contact, all of the suspects will belligerently ignore their commands and curse at them, telling them to leave them alone. As the officers persist in making contact, the suspects will state that they are not breaking the law and will become angrier and more hostile. The suspects should allow this to continue for a minute or two, giving the officers time to think about what they plan to do next.

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In this variation of the scenario the additional suspects should attempt to lynch the suspect involved in the use of force. This will create more chaos and may force the officers to use force against the additional suspects. These fights will continue until all of the suspects are taken into custody.

Debrief questions:

- What was your plan?
- What did you observe when you arrived?
- What did you observe when you made contact with the suspect?
- How did you alter your plan as a result of your assessment? Why?
- What actions did you take and how did those actions demonstrate a reverence for human life?

Domestic Violence Radio Call

Variation 1:

Suspect Behavior:

The suspect will act angry and belligerent, and shout at the victim about their marital problems. The suspect can shout at the officers and trash talk, and but will obey the officers' commands initially. The suspect will not physically threaten the officers or physically resist if they use a firm grip or a control hold. When interviewed by the officers, the suspect will continue to trash talk, but will not divulge any information about what happened. The suspect will be distracted by listening to the victim and when he/she overhears the victim saying that they were hit, the suspect will attempt to leave the location. The suspect will not physically resist the officers and will not run, but just try to walk out. When stopped by the officers, the suspect will make excuses why he/she has to leave and will continue to move past the officers and leave the location. When the officers place the suspect in handcuffs, he/she will protest and act angry, but will not resist.

Victim Behavior:

The victim will be loud and shouting at the suspect when the officers arrive. During the interview, the victim will state that the suspect punched them in the face during an argument about an extramarital affair. At this point in the interview the suspect will attempt to walk out. If the officer conducting the interview with the victim does not help their partner, then the victim will keep them engaged in the interview. If this officer leaves the interview to help their partner physically restrain the suspect and prevent them from leaving, then the victim will intervene and tell the officers to just let him go. The victim should try to convince the officers that this is what he/she wants, and to just let the suspect leave, rather than arrest him/her.

Tactical De-escalation Techniques Resource Guide

Los Angeles Police Department

The officers should not let the suspect leave, but if they do, the victim will praise and thank the officers.

If the officers stop the suspect from leaving and place him/her in handcuffs the victim will protest and become upset with the officers. The victim will not actually fight the officers, but will try to stop them from handcuffing the suspect and will protest that they cannot take the suspect to jail. The suspect will also resist being placed in handcuffs. The suspect will not actually fight the officers or challenge them to a fight, but will turn and face the officers and resist being handcuffed. Regardless of what action the officers take they should do everything they can to explain themselves and calm the victim and the suspect once the situation has been defused.

Variation 2:

Suspect Behavior:

The suspect will act angry and belligerent, and shout at the victim about their marital problems. The suspect can shout at the officers and trash talk, and but will obey the officers' commands initially. The suspect will not physically threaten the officers or physically resist if they use a firm grip or a control hold. When interviewed by the officers, the suspect will continue to trash talk, but will not divulge any information about what happened. The suspect will be distracted by listening to the victim and when he/she overhears the victim saying that they were hit, the suspect will attempt to leave the location. The suspect will not physically resist the officers and will not run, but just try to walk out. When stopped by the officers, the suspect will make excuses why he/she has to leave and will continue to move past the officers and leave the location. When the officers place the suspect in handcuffs, he/she will protest and act angry, but will not resist.

Victim Behavior:

May 2018

Page **60** of **64**

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

The victim will be loud and shouting at the suspect when the officers arrive. During the interview, the victim will state that the suspect punched them in the face during an argument about an extramarital affair. At this point in the interview the suspect will attempt to walk out. If the officer conducting the interview with the victim does not help their partner, then the victim will keep them engaged in the interview. If this officer leaves the interview to help their partner physically restrain the suspect and prevent them from leaving, then the victim will intervene and tell the officers to just let him go. The victim should try to convince the officers that this is what he/she wants, and to just let the suspect leave, rather than arrest him/her. The officers should not let the suspect leave, but if they do, the victim will praise and thank the officers.

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Son or daughter behavior:

During the time when the suspect attempts to walk out of the location, a third role player will enter the scenario. This is a teenage son or daughter of the married couple. Initially, this son should ask questions about what is going on and will attempt to calm down his mom and dad. He should be respectful to the officers, but continually attempt to get too close to them. He will do things such as putting his hand on the officer's shoulder and attempting to whisper into their ear. He should make it seem that he is genuinely trying to help. He may also physically

restrain the suspect and tell them to sit down, or get a glass of water, or lie down. This character is meant to introduce a new and challenging situation for the officers. Each of the things that the son is telling his parents will be things that the officers don't want to allow from a tactical perspective. For example, if the son gives the suspect a glass bottle and tells them to go sit down in an unsearched area, this could be dangerous tactically and it's likely that the officers will give commands to stop these behaviors. If the officers try to stop these behaviors, which the son thinks is helping, the son will start to become upset and will question the officers' motives and intentions. As this continues the son will try to get the officers to become increasingly forceful as the whole scene becomes more and more intense and uncertain. The son is here to introduce a new chaos to the scenario and to cause the officers to have to think critically. In the end the outcome should be the same, the suspect will eventually be placed in handcuffs and arrested. The officers will now need to spend even more time explaining what happened to the both the victim and the son. The point is that if the officers do not spend the extra time and really walk the son through why they did what they did, and why it is fair, he will walk away from the encounter believing a false narrative about the officers out of ignorance of their intentions.

Debrief questions:

- What was your plan?
- What did you observe when you arrived?
- What did you observe when you made contact with the suspect?
- How did you alter your plan as a result of your assessment? Why?
- What actions did you take and how did those actions demonstrate a reverence for human life?

Male with Mental Illness Radio Call

Variation 1:

Officers will respond to the location and observe a man holding a knife, standing in the doorway to a residence. Upon seeing the officers the man will “I don’t need you guys, I’m just depressed, I can handle this myself.” The man will then close the door. The PR will be the spouse of the subject and will be available to meet with the officers. The PR will state that there are no guns inside the location and that the subject is alone inside the residence. If the officers make entry into the location the suspect will walk towards them with the knife in hand, stating “Get out of my house!” until a use of force occurs. If the officers choose to use containment and call for resources the scenario will end.

Variation 2:

Officers will respond to the location and observe a man holding a knife, standing in the doorway to a residence. Upon seeing the officers the man will “I don’t need you guys, I’m just depressed, I can handle this myself.” The man will then close the door. The PR will be the spouse of the subject and will be available to meet with the officers. The PR will state that there are no guns inside the location and that the subject is alone inside the residence. If the officers make entry into the location the suspect will walk towards them with the knife in hand, stating “Get out of my house!” until a use of force occurs. If the officers choose to use containment and call for resources the man will open the door, with the knife in hand, and sit down on the threshold. The subject will state, “Why are you here?” If at any point the officers close distance the subject will say, “Don’t come any closer or you’ll be sorry.” If the officers use good de-escalation techniques including calling for additional resources, making a plan, and purposeful communication the subject will eventually put the knife down and comply.

Debrief questions:

- What was your plan?
- What did you observe when you arrived?
- What did you observe when you made contact with the suspect?
- How did you alter your plan as a result of your assessment? Why?
- What actions did you take and how did those actions demonstrate a reverence for human life?