

# Training for crisis essay examples

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The taking of hostages is seen as an attention- seeking behavior to attract an audience, for without an audience hostage taking is meaningless. The taking of hostages should be viewed as an attempt at problem solving . Hostage takers in most cases use hostages as bargaining chips throughout the negotiation process. The negotiator is engaged to initiate a dialogue with the captor who is the hostage taker to ensure safe release of the hostages. The negotiator should be able to ensure the safety of the hostages, the criminals and the general public surrounding the incident. For the negotiation team to be successful there is need to understand that the method of intervention varies with situations and there is no specific procedure for any case. For successful negotiation to occur, a well trained and experienced negotiator should be engaged. Police psychologist can be used as negotiators. The negotiator should be able to conduct a quick study of the surrounding situation and be creative enough in developing the course of action. There risks that are involved and they should be foreseeable for the necessary precautions to be taken. The main objective of the negotiator is to ensure that no lives are lost, thus the process should be carried out with a lot of caution and calmness.

## **Training for Crisis**

According to the oxford dictionary a hostage is defined as a person seized or held as security for the fulfillment of a condition. The hostage taker is mostly a frustrated person suffering a crisis. Hostage takers should be viewed as people who are suffering from acute level of frustration.

There are two classifications of behavior which may be observed in hostage takers: instrumental and expressive behavior . In Instrumental behavior, the

perpetrator seeks to have fulfilled some recognizable goal . Bargaining negotiation is mostly used with this type of behavior and involves substantive demands from each party. Those engaging in expressive behavior mostly want to portray their power . The negotiations mainly focus on the impact of emotions and relationship on resolution of the crisis . In this scenario, the behavior of the hostage taker can be described as instrumental. He is demanding for food, beer and his immunity from the murder charge for him not to hurt the hostages.

Hostage takers can define in relation to their behavior and actions. If a negotiator can be able to unearth the reason for the actions of the hostage taker then it becomes easy to identify the type of the hostage taker being dealt with and hence a best problem solving approach can be developed to deal with the situation. A hostage taker may be psychotic, emotionally unstable, isolated or a criminal. The hostage taker in this scenario may be mentally unstable. A mentally disable person may not be in touch with reality. This individual is likely to be a loner; acting in obedience to some intensely personal, often obscure impulse. The captor may be suffering from paranoid schizophrenic personality where he loses touch with reality . He is not aware that he cannot be left to escape and get away with the murder charges. The negotiator should maintain a slow pace of the dialogue and make the individual to stay calm in order to allow them get in touch with the reality. This will increase chances of successful outcome of the process.

The role of a hostage negotiator is to initiate communication with the hostage taker in a procedural manner in order to end the crisis without any casualties. The negotiator's main role is to save human life which may lead

to accumulative stress for the negotiator or it may attracts political and public relations interests due to the drama involved. The negotiator should plan for this stress as it's a matter of life of death and they don't want to feel responsible for any loss of life . In this case the hostage taker has already taken the life of one person, thus the negotiator should be able to ensure the safety of the family members; no life should be lost. The place of the incident is also a residential area so there are neighbors, innocent bystanders and onlookers, so the negotiator should have this entire people in mind, and be well prepared on how to deal with the situation.

There are four stages to a hostage situation: alarm, crisis, accommodation and resolution. The alarm stage is the most traumatic and dangerous and last for about an hour and the chances of successful negotiations at this stage could be zero percent . The hostages tend to experience high levels of trauma as they feel confused and defenseless. The hostages should be able to gain coping skills at this stage and put on a strong will to survive. In case of panic, the perpetrator may overreact. This may lead to loss of lives or dramatic destructions. At the crisis stage the hostage take is rational and it thus marks the beginning of reason. The accommodation stage is marked by the Stockholm syndrome where the hostages begin to identify and familiarize with the adaptor. This is as result of prolonged interactions where personal information is shared. When the feelings of the captor and that of the hostage are mutual the chances of survival for the hostages become higher. The chances that the negotiations will end successfully stand at 80% as the hostages familiarize themselves with their captors by sharing personal information. In the resolution stage the hostage taker become s fatigued out

of waiting for long hours. Their expectations are diminished and the negotiator has to engage their skills at this point resolve the situation . The negotiator should be able to tell the behaviors of the hostage captors, whether they are willing to surrender or they are suicidal. Mitigation measures should be put in place if the captor shows any suicidal behavioral traits.

The negotiator should know that the hostage is at the mercy of the hostage taker and is being held involuntarily. The person is therefore suffering from psychological trauma, which the negotiator should be able to manage. These have led the police department to engage negotiator in crisis debriefing situations, to enable them handle the traumatic stress of the victims . The hostage taker views the hostage as a utility. The hostage is of no value to the hostage taker as a person . The hostage taker should not be made to feel as if they have more power or made to feel as if they are so worthy. The negotiator should use “ I” statements if the captor decides to surrender to avoid wrong misinterpretation of communication which may lead to injuries and deaths.

When it comes to intervention, the negotiator must be able to understand the emotions and the intended motive of the captor. The negotiator should do accurate assessment of the risks involved. Good negotiation skills call for reduction of anxiety and at the same time attempting to create a problem solving atmosphere. The Negotiator must be an active listener with good relationship skills to be able to handle the crisis situation. The negotiator must gather more information about the hostage taker in order to determine their mental state. This information can be obtained from friends, neighbors,

relatives and coworkers. One should be able to establish the degree of immobility /mobility of the captor and make a decision on the intervention procedure. Identify the personal and social identities. Personal identity focuses on how individuals perceive themselves in terms of their attributes while social identity focuses on the person's relationships like membership to a group. This can help the negotiator to come up with key agreement points .

Any negotiation procedure should be done with caution and patience. First, define the problem in order to identify the motives of the captor. The negotiator should find out the terms and conditions of the hostage taker and who they are, what they want and what are they willing to give. Listening skills comes in handy in this case. Ask open-ended questions so as to access the emotional state/mental condition of the hostage taker and the atmosphere of the situation. The negotiator should collaborate with the hostage taker and agree with some of the ideas they convey. The chances of successful outcome will be high if you prolong the time let's say , for three hours, standoff likelihoods of successful negation lies between 90-100%. The resources of the hostage taker tend to be depleted as time goes by and they also become fatigued. Avoid making negative and interpretive statements/ comments that may agitate the captor. It is advisable to use owning or ' I ' statement to build relationship with the hostage taker. " You " statement may provoke the perpetrator .

The negotiator should agree with some of the captor's ideas and demands in order to secure the safety of the hostages. The hostage taker in this case is expecting a case of beer, some fast food and immunity for the murder

charge in return for the safety of the hostages. Ensure that the hostage taker gives something in return: in this case he can let go of the son if provided with the food. Try to make the captor consider the hostages as his own blood and flesh so they don't deserve to be harmed in any way. Let the hostage taker have the feeling that he will be given immunity against the murder charges . This way he feels he has won. The negotiator should keep the hopes of the captor alive until all the hostages are released safely . After the release, the hostages may be traumatised. They should go through psychological support, debriefing, physical rest and psychotropic medication.

A police psychologist should be well trained in bargaining and crisis intervention. He or She should be well trained in interviewing skills that can enable them to get information about a person, place and incident intelligence that can be used to plan the negotiating approach. They should be trained in people management skills in policing in collaboration with the mental health professionals to enable them to manage the mentally ill, active listening skills, community resources, legal issues and coordination and cooperation between police and mental health professionals . The psychologist should undergo training in order to gain the right negotiation skills before becoming a member of the hostage negotiation team.

## **References**

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