

Crisis Negotiation



Categories of Hostage Takers

- Mentally Disturbed
 - Most common type of hostage situation (52%)
 - Common Types
 - Paranoid schizophrenia
 - Depression
- Criminals in the process of committing a crime
- Prisoners in revolt



Categories of Hostage Takers

- Politically Motivated
 - Examples
 - Iran
 - Munich Olympics
 - Goals
 - Show the public that the government can not protect its citizens
 - Virtually guarantee immediate media coverage for their cause
 - Support their hope that the government will overreact
 - Place excessive restrictions
 - Result in civil discontent
 - Often to demand release of incarcerated group members

Categories of Hostage Takers

- Aggrieved person who feels wronged by the system
- Suicide/barricaded-subject incidents
- High-risk suicide incidents
- Domestic incidents
- Warrants
 - Mental health
 - High risk (felons, drug dealers)



People Involved in the Situation

- Inside
 - Hostage taker
 - Hostages
- Outside
 - Commander
 - Tactical team
 - Negotiating team
 - Primary negotiator (communicates, negotiates)
 - Secondary negotiator (documents, coordinates info)
 - Tertiary negotiator (carries out tasks)
 - Police psychologist
 - Patrol team
 - Media team



Negotiating Steps

- Isolate the Area
- Build Rapport
 - Express feelings of understanding & empathy, but don't say "I understand how you feel"
 - Encourage hostage-taker to do the talking
 - Display your own calmness
 - Find opportunities, no matter how small, to work with the hostage taker
 - Do not lie, but be empathic when possible
 - Help the hostage taker save face, but minimize suggestions

Negotiation Steps

- Determine the extent to which the incident is negotiable
 - The hostage taker must have a need to live
 - There must be a threat of force by the authorities
 - There must be demands by the hostage taker
 - The negotiator must be seen as a person who can hurt the hostage taker, but who is willing to help
 - There must be time to negotiate
 - A reliable channel of communication must exist between the negotiator and the hostage taker
 - The location and the communications of the incident need to be contained
 - The negotiator must be able to deal with the hostage taker making the decisions

Negotiation Steps

- Negotiating
 - Avoid accepting deadlines
 - Keep the hostage-taker talking
 - Listen, listen, listen
 - Don't rush — time is on your side
 - Be sure the hostage-taker understands that you are not able to make final decisions
 - Withhold rewards (e.g., food, water, media) as long as possible so that they will be available when really needed

Examples of Negotiating Strategies

- Emotionally Disturbed
 - Encourage hostage taker to vent
 - Use reflective techniques
 - Never argue—logic will not help
 - Give the hostage-taker plenty of time
- Criminal
 - Clearly state the range of your cooperation behavior
 - Be calm and businesslike
 - Use logic
 - Avoid setting or accepting time limits
 - Help the criminal save face

Assessing Violence Potential

Demographics

- Age (15-25)
- Sex (male)
- Race (African American, Hispanic)
- SES (low)
- IQ (less than 90)
- Education (low, underachiever)
- Substance abuse (yes)
- Employment (unemployed, frequent changes)
- Residential stability (frequent moves)

Assessing Violence Potential

Demographics

- Psychological disorder
- Victim of child abuse
- Family violence
- Street gang association
- Lack of emotional support (e.g., friends, family)
- High interest in weapons
- Has recently received notice of a fatal disease

Assessing Violence Potential

Previous Violent Behavior

- Arrests/convictions for violent offenses
- Mental commitments (danger to others)
- Juvenile record of violent crimes
- History of arson
- History of animal torture
- Previous violence is escalating in frequency and severity
- "Third strike" suspect
- Parolee
- Has recently killed a significant person in his life

Assessing Violence Potential
The Hostages

- Family member (especially primary care giver)
- Inability to form interpersonal bond
- Hostage behavior

Assessing Violence Potential
Violent Behavior During Incident

- Violent verbalizations
- Points weapon at hostage
- Demonstrated violence against a hostage
- Shots fired after law enforcement arrive on scene
- Shots fired during negotiations
- Officer shot
- Demands that authorities kill him

Assessing Violence Potential
Behavior During Incident

- Indicates he has nothing to live for
- States "I'm not going back to prison"
- States "I want to go out in a big way"
- Appears to be highly emotional
- Makes unreasonable demands
- Issues deadlines

Assessing Violence Potential

Signs of Decreased Risk

- ___ Responds to negotiator's contacts
- ___ Is willing to talk to negotiator
- ___ Allows hostages to communicate with negotiator
- ___ Releases a hostage
- ___ Allows freedom of movement
- ___ Alludes to the future

Survival Tips for Hostages

Turner (1989)

- Do not lose hope and avoid an open display of despair
- Don't antagonize the hostage taker
 - The first hour is the most volatile
 - Initially do not speak unless spoken to
 - Do exactly as you are told—do not argue
 - Avoid making suggestions
 - Only make eye contact when being told what to do
- Try to rest but remain facing your captor
- Be observant, but not conspicuously so, as you may be released
- Do not try to escape unless you are certain that you will be successful
- In case of rescue
 - Expect noise and lights
 - Hit the floor and stay there



Stockholm Syndrome

- Named after a 1973 incident in Sweden in which 4 employees were held for 5 days in a bank vault
- Refers to a situation in which the hostages express positive feelings toward the hostage taker and hostile feelings toward authorities
- Most likely to occur when
 - Hostage takers have frequent contact with hostages
 - Interaction is positive
 - Hostage situation is lengthy

Therapy for Hostages

- 33% to 50% of hostages need therapy, not all seek it
- Basic approach
 - Restore power to the victim
 - Reduce feelings of isolation
 - Reduce feelings of helplessness
 - Encourage feelings of control
 - Allow expressions of anger toward the hostage takers
 - Facilitate the recognition and acceptance of their vulnerability


