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 cannot 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

- 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