



BEST PRACTICES IN TABLE-TOP EXERCISES

“The Active Shooter”

L. Darryl Armstrong PhD

Accredited Public Relations

Certified Crisis Management Consultant

Certified Aggression Management Trainer

www.ldarrylarmstrong.com

1.888.340.2006 drdarryl@aol.com

FULL DISCLOSURE

- Yes my name is L. DARRYL ARMSTRONG
- Yes, I do have an Uncle Neil Armstrong
- Yes, I do have a cousin Jack Armstrong
- No, I don't have another Brother "Darryl"
- And If you laughed at any of these - my guess is you are over 40!

WHO AM I?

Behavioral
Psychologist



Communications consultant

Crisis – issues management
planner and consultant

40-years experience - Federal
& corporate

Certified Aggression
Management Trainer

Certified Crisis Management
Counselor



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Value of doing table-top exercises

How to develop a “model” table-top

Ensuring success in conducting table tops

Importance of group - self evaluations

Using independent facilitators - observers

The active shooter scenario narrative – design – execution - evaluation

WHY WE ARE HERE TODAY

[You Tube video](#)

TRAINING - AGENDA

Provide details to help you develop a model table-top

Share lessons learned - common themes discovered

Suggest ideas - get out of the box

Walk you through setting up “Active Shooter” scenario

If time permits share US-Department of Homeland Security recommendations - How to Respond to an “Active Shooter”

If you have sound please turn it on – no narrative just music



CONTEXT - IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

Why this is important to management

1.7 million “violent victimizations” annually

\$6.5 Billion +

- lost business - productivity
- litigation
- medical care
- psychiatric care
- higher insurance rates
- increased security measures
- negative publicity
- loss of employees, students
- loss of community, alumni support

Source: 2005 Bureau Labor Statistics

CONTEXT – IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

Average week, 1 employee killed – 25 seriously injured

**Homicides second leading cause of job-related death
First motor vehicle**

Only 68-70% of employers have written policies

Fewer than 20% have comprehensive plan

Fewer than 33% actually train – practice

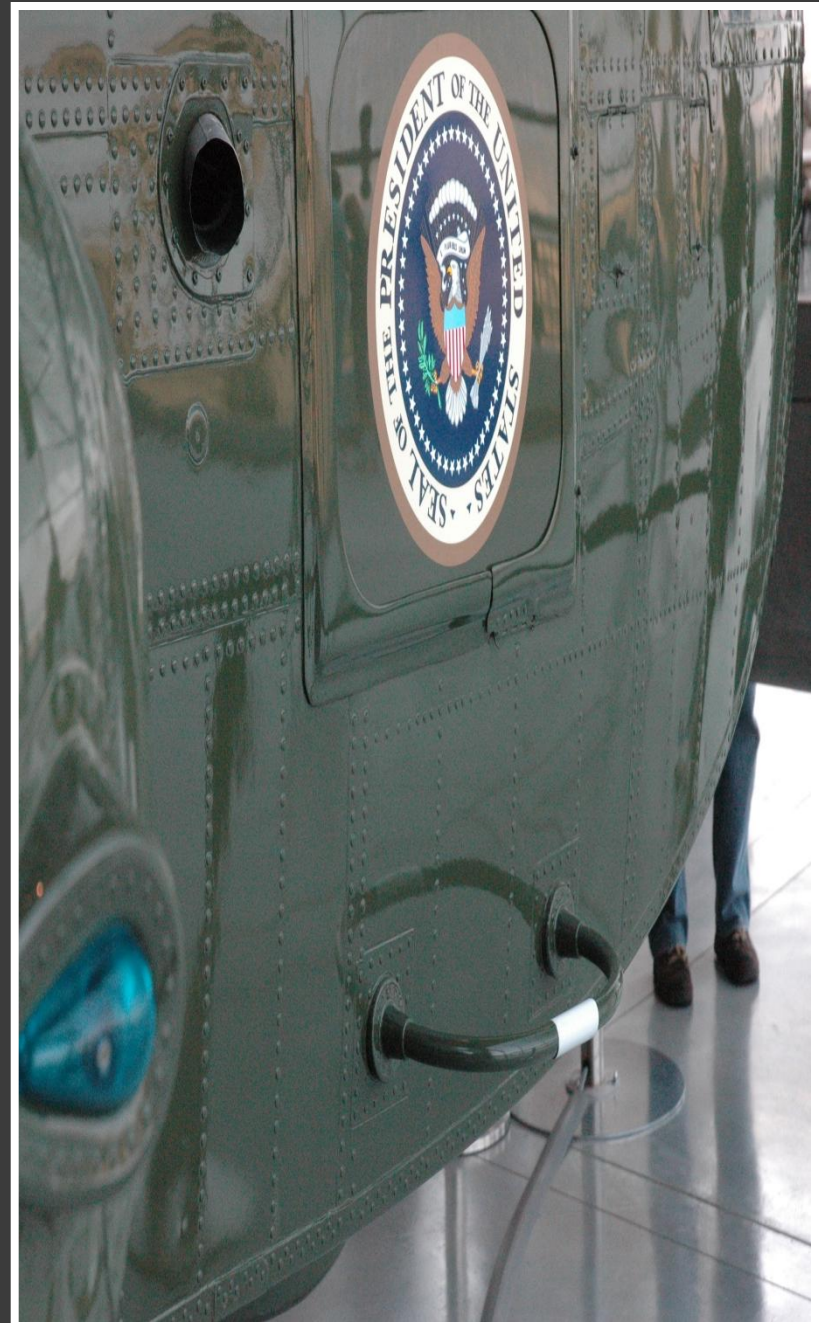
Source: 2005 Bureau Labor Statistics

“HOUSTON WE HAVE A PROBLEM”

- ✓ **Preparing and executing table top exercises is no longer luxury**
- ✓ **ESSENTIAL to practice - train - be prepared**
- ✓ **Level of preparedness will determine outcome – speed of recovery**

SURVIVE - RECOVER

- **Prepare for the worse, pray for the best**
- **Those who prepare – survive**
- **Recover more quickly**



WHAT DO WE GET FROM PRACTICE & TRAINING?

Assess Internal – External Capabilities
Train Staff
Build Relationships

IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION

Learn To Collaborate Not Just Cooperate
Nicety-nice Vs. Co-labor
Develop Partnering Arrangements NOW

SO WHAT IS A TABLE-TOP?

Collaboratively designed, facilitated & practiced realistic emergency narrative scenario where participants discuss an emergency and make group decisions to resolve it

THREE COMPONENTS OF A MODEL TABLE TOP

PREPARATION

Researching
Planning
Writing



EXECUTION

Facilitating
Participating
Observing



*Are you
prepared?*

EVALUATION

Group critiques
Self-evaluations
After Action Reports
Lessons Learned



Q. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS CRITICAL FOR A MODEL TABLE TOP EXERCISE?

- A. Credible, realistic scenarios**
- B. Focused attention on local preparedness needs - priorities**
- C. Logistically feasible to implement**
- D. Context for management understanding**
- E. All the above**
- F. None of the above**



WHAT ARE SOME COMMON CHALLENGES WE FACE IN AN EMERGENCY?

Credible – Reliable -- Verifiable information from the scene

Communications – “Proactive – Reactive”

Command – control – “Haig Syndrome”

Surge capacity – “Handling the crisis intensity”

HOW DO WE OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES?

Performance Strengths

Organizational strengths

Individual strengths and experiences

Experience with actual emergencies

Emphasis on prior training - preparedness

Q: WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF A MODEL TABLE-TOP?

- A. Designed to identify strengths – vulnerabilities in preparedness**
- B. Develop metrics to assess performance – preparedness**
- C. Provide for continuous improvement of personnel**
- D. See if you can just “git ‘er done”**
- E. All the Above**
- F. None of the above**



WHAT OTHER GOALS SHOULD WE CONSIDER?

**Relationship building –
internal & external**

Staff training

**Evaluating organization's
preparedness goals**

**Identifying gaps in
preparedness**

**Determining where to
make recommendations for
improvement**





WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A FACILITATOR?

Every table-top requires a facilitator

Depends on exercise

Experience levels of participants

**Hands on – Hands off -
Moderate**

COMMON ELEMENTS OF A MODEL TABLE-TOP

Experienced facilitator

Evolving hypothetical scenario

Group and individual discussions

**Some level of collective decision-
making**

**Recognizing & initiating
response to an emergency**

**Exercise communications across
depts. internally**

**Assess coordination with partner
agencies**

**Evaluate extensively process and
lessons learned**



TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS

Group

Self evaluation

ASSESSMENT – GROUP

Debrief at end of exercise

Discuss collective performance

Identify strengths & weaknesses

Relate performance - actual situations when possible

ASSESSMENT - INDIVIDUAL

Self -evaluations

Evaluate structure of exercise

How better to conduct

Q. HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE A LESSONS LEARNED DATABASE?

- 1. Yes**
- 2. No**
- 3. Don't know**
- 4. What's a database?**



IMPORTANCE OF AFTER ACTION REPORTS

Lessons learned database

After action reports to management

Recommendations upstream

LESSONS LEARNED - TO BUILDING A MODEL

- **Exercise – achieve specific objective**
- **Context – why should management care**
- **Realistic – while logistically feasible**
- **Issue areas rather than “scenarios”**
- **Decision-making – forced, targeted and time delineated**
- **Limited number of participants – key ones essential**
- **Collaborative exercise design – execution**
- **Participating agencies need to be involved in design – execution**
- **Outside developers, facilitator, observers**

EVALUATION

Q. I feel more confident about planning, executing and evaluating a model table-top exercise.

- 1. Yes**
- 2. No**
- 3. Maybe**
- 4. No opinion**

THE ACTIVE SHOOTER

*Establishing A Training Narrative
Building The Model Table Top
Plus Recommendations On How To Respond*

Sources :

L. Darryl Armstrong PhD, APR, CAMT, CCMC

Shawn Martin FF, EMT

Saint Baranbas Health Care Center Systems

Rand Corporation

US Dept Homeland Security

US-DHS After Action Reports

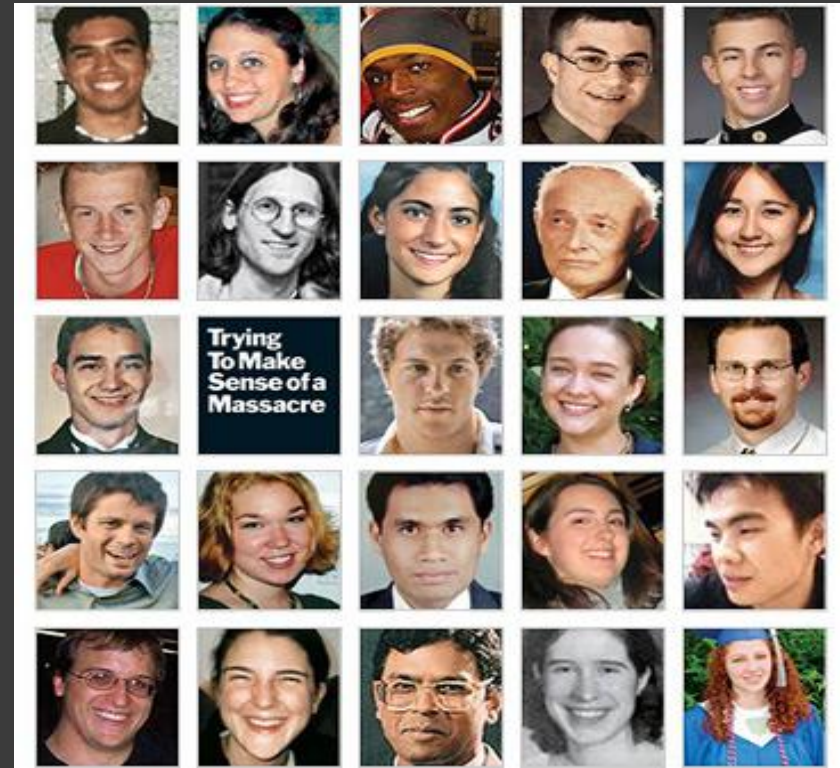
University of North Carolina

University of Pittsburg School of Medicine

THINK ABOUT IT! WHAT IF ...

NEWS The Tragedy *HELP The Healing*
APRIL 20TH 1999
COLUMBINE
FRIEND OF MINE
VICTIMS OF A HATE CRIME

Steven Curnow Daniel Rohrbaugh Lauren Townsend John Tomlin Daniel Mauser
 Kelly Fleming
 Matthew Kiechler
 Kyle Velasquez
 Isaiah Shoels
 Dave Sanders
 Rachel Scott
 Corey DePooter
 Cassie Bernall



DEFINITION – ACTIVE SHOOTER

Individual(s) actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill

Confined - populated area (school, mall, public meeting)

Use firearms (mostly, however instances of knives, swords and bombs) – no pattern or method in victim selection

Are a threat until contained or neutralized



BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS –ACTIVE SHOOTER

- ✓ **School violence – not sudden – not impulsive**
- ✓ **Often no history of prior violence or criminal behavior**
- ✓ **Considered greatest “terrorist” threat on campus**
- ✓ **They have a desire to kill – injure – maim – taunt – bully**
- ✓ **Observed with the “1000-yard” stare**
- ✓ **No concern for their safety – threat - capture**
- ✓ **Has intended victims – will seek them out**
- ✓ **Yet will accept targets of opportunity**
- ✓ **Carnage continues – until stopped by LE or others – suicide - intervention**

COMMON SCENARIO – ACTIVE SHOOTER

Situations are unpredictable – evolve quickly

Immediate deployment and engagement of law enforcement is critical

Often the entire situation is over within 15 minutes

Individuals (students, employees, faculty, staff) must be prepared and develop a survival mentality

You must be trained to mentally – physically to deal with the situation to survive and recover



**SETTING UP
YOUR
EXERCISE**

TRAINING GOALS

Define term “Active Shooter”

Measures to reduce effectiveness of shooter

Describe actions expected from law enforcement, et.al.

EXPLAIN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE – WHY ARE WE HERE?

You can use video, audio, newspaper clips, photos

- ✓Spill-over crime
- ✓Work place violence
- ✓Early school shootings

CONTEXT - SITUATION TODAY

- ✓No longer can predict next threat
- ✓Varied assailants – not students, employees
- ✓No obvious or specific targets – or very focused targets
- ✓Also targets of opportunity

CONTEXT –

- ✓Cost to Management

SHOULD WE BE MORE CONCERNED TODAY THAN EVER?

- **\$850,000 per homicide incident in work place violence**
- **\$500,000 average settlement for work place violence negligence not including punitive damages**
- **\$3,000,000 average jury settlement for work place violence negligence**

Source: National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety

DO WE REALLY NEED TO BE CONCERNED?

We've never had a incident in the past,

We have good policies,

We do pre-employment screening,

We have our own security force,

And, besides, if anything happens, we can always call the police...



**Average response time for
first officer on the scene
Atlanta Police Department
... 11 minutes!**

Source: Atlanta Journal -Constitution Study 2008



**Average active shooter incident =
5 minutes or less!**

“The 1000-yard stare”



SHOULD WE BE EVEN MORE CONCERNED?

Yes!

When stressors increase – violence can –does occur

- Economic conditions**
- Civil unrest**
- Political unhappiness**
- Socio-economic stress**
- Research verifies the 80/20 rule – 80% of the problems are caused by 20% of the employees, students, customers!**

ESTABLISH “OPERATING PRINCIPLES”

**Explain role of
facilitator – participants
– observers**

**Clearly state goals and
agenda**

**Outline expectations
and outcomes desired**

**Explain evaluation
process and
documentation**

SETUP CONDITIONS FOR NARRATIVE – PHASE ONE

**You are principal – small rural
school**

Hands-on with all students

Know them – families well

**Serve counselor –debate club
coach**

**They come to your office
frequently**

You are organized person

Students respect you

**School has championship
sports teams – well-funded**

Academic teams less funded

ESTABLISH A NARRATIVE

MAY -2011

John is a 15-year old freshman

Bright – A/B student – optimistic

Well dressed – neat – orderly – collaborative

Well spoken, kind, considerate, engaging

Not good at sports – more academic

Member of debate club – his passion

Anxious to go with family on vacation

Stops by your office to say goodbye for summer

DISCUSS AND EXCHANGE UNDERSTANDING

HEAR – SEE – FEEL – THINK – WHAT TO DO

2 -FACILITATOR FURTHER DEVELOPS NARRATIVE

SEPTEMBER 2011

John returns to school

Visible changes – appearance

Dress – sloppy – seems disoriented somewhat at times

Often appears to be –pre-occupied in thought

Argumentative towards others

During debate club verbally abuses student

You break up argument – he storms out

DISCUSS AND EXCHANGE UNDERSTANDING

HEAR – SEE – FEEL – THINK – WHAT TO DO

3 -FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF NARRATIVE

OCTOBER 2011

John does not return to debate club

Comes to you reports he is sick – afternoon

You tell him you missed him at debate club

Says he doesn't care any more about debate

Won't look you in the eye – grooming has worsened

Shows up more, more for sick excuses over next few weeks

Vague and unspecific complaints – slovenly now – no care for appearances

DISCUSS AND EXCHANGE UNDERSTANDING

HEAR-SEE-FEEL THINK – WHAT TO DO

4- FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF NARRATIVE

NOVEMBER 2011

John explains to you parents divorcing

No summer vacation

Split between Mother- Father visits

Tells you he is bullied by other students - for most of his life

Blurts out “wish they would all die”

DISCUSS AND EXCHANGE UNDERSTANDING

HEAR-SEE-FEEL THINK – WHAT TO DO

STOP EXERCISE - DEBRIEF

ASK:

- **What have you learned from observation of John?**
- **What specific behavior traits and changes have you observed?**
- **What, if anything, can you do at this point?**

Q. IS AN INTERVENTION NECESSARY?

- 1. YES**
- 2. NO**
- 3. MAYBE**
- 4. DON'T KNOW**
- 5. NO OPINION**

PHASE TWO – THE INCIDENT

NOVEMBER 2011

DAY BEFORE BREAK

**10 a.m. – “Popping noises” –
firecrackers?**

Loud noise – like explosion

**You hear a teacher scream –
CODE BLUE**

Students in office – hysterical!

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

**10:03 – Students – teachers
running**

**Hear doors closing and people
shouting, crying**

WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

10:05 – More “popping sounds”

**Another loud bang – smoke
fills hall**

**See from office people lying on
floor**

**Sirens, horns blaring – getting
closer**

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

RESPONSE

10:15 Law Enforcement arrives – escorts students from office quickly

You tell LE you think shooter is John

You are escorted to safety

STOP THE EXERCISE – ENGAGE EVERYONE

WHAT IS YOUR NEXT STEP?

10:20 LE commander asks for John's files

Wants a quick debrief from you

CAN YOU GIVE JOHN'S FILES TO LE?

WHAT DO YOU TELL THEM ABOUT JOHN?

WHAT TYPE OF ASSISTANCE CAN YOU OFFER NOW?

10:19 LE contact team enters school

Moves toward sounds of shots

See John shooting

10:25 SWAT shoots and kills John

OUTCOME

20 students, teachers, staff wounded

10 dead including John

DEBRIEF – GROUP DISCUSSION

- **What will be immediate affects on staff, faculty students?**
- **What type of emotional support is in place for your people?**
- **What system is in place to deal with parents?**
- **How will you notify next of kin dead, wounded?**
- **How do you keep students from media?**
- **What support services do you need ?**
- **How will you recover, cleanup from carnage?**

EXERCISE COMPLETED

DEBRIEF GROUP

- **CONDUCT EVALUATIONS – DOCUMENT**
- **DEVELOP LESSONS LEARNED REPORT FOR MANAGEMENT**
- **DEVELOP PRESENTATION FROM REPORT TO DELIVER TO MANAGEMENT**

Q. I THINK I AM BETTER PREPARED TO DEVELOP, PARTICIPATE IN, OR EVALUATE AN “ACTIVE SHOOTER” TABLE-TOP EXERCISE.

- 1. YES**
- 2. NO**
- 3. MAYBE**
- 4. DON'T KNOW**
- 5. NO OPINION**

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

www.ldarrylarmstrong.com

Click on “Webinars” for additional resources

RESPONSE – OPTIONS

AWARENESS TACTICS TO CONSIDER – ACTIVE SHOOTER

Adopt a survival mind set

Be aware of environment – any possible dangers

Hyper-awareness is okay – unless it becomes paranoia

Be aware of two nearest exits wherever you are

Sit as close to an exit as possible – or a window that you can break

Sit where you can see people entering & leaving when possible

If in an office – stay there - secure door - furniture

Hallway – get to a room – secure door - furniture

Last resort – attempt to take down shooter

**At close range – can't flee – chance of survival
greater if you try to incapacitate him/her**

US DHS RECOMMENDATIONS - HOW TO RESPOND

**Quickly determine most reasonable way to protect yourself.
Your students, customers, clients, public WILL FOLLOW
your lead.**

Evacuate

Hide out

Take action against shooter

AFTER LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES

Follow LE instructions

Provide information requested

Their job is to neutralize the shooter

First responders will not assist injured

EMT personnel will arrive second

When taken to a safe station – remain until advised

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

To survive – YOU MUST STAY CALM

Assure others you and LE are working to protect them

The more you practice and train the more likely you survive

ADVANCE QUESTIONS – DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

Intercom in all classrooms/office areas?

Is administrative office centralized?

What are visitor access points?

How do you control vehicular traffic flow on campus?

How dense is your campus?

How do people normally move around campus?

What restrictions do you have on clothing attire, backpacks, cell phones?

Has robust law enforcement presence on campus?

What is the response capability?

How has community reacted in past to crises?

Do you have multiple ways to report emergencies?

How do you alert community to emergency?

Do you have places for refuge?

Are there multiple escape routes?

Do you have a behavioral intervention team in place?

Are they properly utilized when behavioral change is noted?

What will be immediate affects on staff, faculty students?

What type of emotional support is in place for your people?

How will you notify next of kin dead, wounded?

How will you recover, cleanup from carnage?

What system is in place to deal with parents?

How do you keep students from media?

What support services do you need have?

Who all do we need to have at the table to review our lessons learned?