



OPEN LINE

Official Publication of the
Western States Hostage Negotiators' Association

TRAINING CRISIS NEGOTIATORS SINCE 1986

October 2026



BREAKING NEWS

Registration for Salem 2027 is now open at www.wshna.com. Also, room reservations for our host hotel, The Grand Hotel or our overflow hotel across the street, The Holman Riverfront Park Hotel are also available. **The breaking news is this year a 10% discount on the seminar registration fee will automatically be deducted at checkout if you register before January 1, 2027. This is a \$35.50 discount per registrant.** The HNT Challenge registration, produced by Crisis Systems Management, is also available now. Note: You must be registered for the seminar to register for the HNT Challenge. Your registration number will be required for the Challenge registration.

FELLOW NEGOTIATOR NEEDS ASSISTANCE

Jason Marketti is a fellow Crisis Negotiator from Lewiston (ID) PD. Jason recently experienced an unimaginable loss, his wife died shortly after the birth of their third child.

Consider donating to the GoFundMe account. More information is included at GoFundMe below and more to the story.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-sharyn-markettis-family-yajqg>

Any support WSHNA members could offer would be appreciated.

2027 HNT CHALLENGE – SALEM 2027

If you are new to the world of negotiation, welcome. During my 38 years with the Seattle Police Department, I found hostage and crisis negotiations to be both the most challenging and the most rewarding aspect of law enforcement. Since I am not sure of your level of experience, I will answer your question from two perspectives.

If you have considerable experience in this specialized field, there may be opportunities for you to participate as a facilitator, judge, role player, or in another support capacity. If you are new to negotiations, I encourage you to attend as an observer. Please note that observer registration is required, as space is limited.

The HNT Challenge has earned a reputation as one of the premier negotiation

competitions in the country, according to participants and professionals in the field. In partnership with Deb McMahon of Crisis Systems Management and our Past President, Troy King, hundreds of hours are invested each year to develop a realistic, immersive scenario, often inspired by an actual incident.

Each team is rigorously evaluated on a wide range of negotiation competencies, including:

- Communication with primary and secondary subjects
- Intelligence gathering and analysis
- Coordination with tactical teams
- Coordination with command staff
- Management of outside influences and emerging complications
- Critical decision-making under pressure

Teams are evaluated by experienced judges who remain assigned to the same team throughout the challenge to ensure consistency and fairness. We have recently implemented an AI-assisted judging platform, adding a new level of technology and insight into the evaluation process. Our role players may be seasoned negotiators, professional actors, or other highly qualified personnel, creating an exceptionally realistic training environment.

Without question, the HNT Challenge is one of the most valuable training opportunities offered during the seminar. Winning the

Challenge has become a significant source of pride, and the friendly rivalry among participating teams often spans many years. Whether you would like to participate as a competitor, observer, facilitator, actor, or judge, we would be delighted to have you involved.

To participate:

1. Register for the 2027 Training Seminar.
2. Register separately for the HNT Challenge.
3. Review the FAQs for additional information.

Complete details can be found at the [2027 Seminar | WSHNA](#).

Please do not delay. Due to the complexity of the event, facility requirements, and staffing needs, participation is limited to ten teams. Important: Anyone wishing to participate in the HNT Challenge in any capacity must first be registered for the 2027 Training Seminar.



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FEATURED SALEM 2027 SPEAKER**Julie L. Collinson, MA, NCC, LPC****Empathy at the Edge: Preventing
Overreach in Crisis Intervention
Professionals' Roles**

Crisis intervention is built on empathy and connection, but when those lines blur, the cost can be high. This session looks at the everyday challenges crisis intervention

professionals face when emotional merging, empathy overreach, and identity blurring begins to erode personal boundaries. We will explore how these patterns can quietly set the stage for compassion fatigue, making it harder to stay grounded and effective. Together, we will discuss real-world examples, early warning signs, and practical strategies to protect your own well-being while continuing to offer meaningful support to others.

Learning Objectives

Recognize early signs of empathy overreach, emotional merging, and blurred role identity as they appear in law enforcement response, clinical practice, and advocacy work.

Examine how boundary erosion contributes to compassion fatigue and diminished effectiveness across crisis-response roles, using cross-disciplinary examples relevant to policing, treatment settings, and community advocacy. Implement practical, profession-specific strategies to maintain healthy boundaries and personal resilience, supporting sustainable, ethical, and grounded engagement with individuals in crisis.

Professional Biography

Julie Collinson is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) with a Masters in Professional Mental Health Counseling and Addictions Studies from Lewis & Clark College. Since 2006, she has advanced behavioral health and public safety across Oregon.

Her career began with the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office, where she developed training programs and organized nationally recognized conferences on child abuse, domestic violence, search and rescue, and peer support. In 2014, she became Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Coordinator, strengthening collaborative crisis response efforts.

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In 2018, Julie joined the Oregon Department of Corrections, creating parenting programs, curricula, and family support services for adults in custody. Since 2020, she has served as Behavioral Health Program Coordinator at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training's Center for Policing Excellence.

Certified in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Julie is a clinical member of DPSST's Peer Support and Threat Assessment Teams. She also maintains a private practice specializing in trauma-focused care for first responders and military professionals and frequently delivers training locally and nationally on crisis intervention, veterans' awareness, resiliency, de-escalation, and stress management.

FEATURED SALEM 2027 SPEAKER

Officer Brian Willard

Officer Brian Willard is a 19-year law enforcement veteran currently serving with the Oregon City Police Department. He began his career with the Toledo Police Department, where he served for three years before joining Oregon City in 2010.

Officer Willard currently works in patrol and serves as a negotiator with the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office Crisis Negotiation

Team, where he has served for approximately three years. His negotiation experience includes responding to barricaded subjects, hostage situations, and other high-risk critical incidents.

Throughout his career, Officer Willard has also served as a field training officer, crash reconstructionist, and drug recognition expert. His experience across patrol, specialized assignments, and crisis negotiation provides a practical perspective on communication, decision-making, and the challenges officers face during rapidly evolving critical incidents.

Synopsis

An officer attempting to clear a local park was assaulted and seriously injured after contacting a subject inside a tent. Following the assault, the suspect entered the officer's patrol vehicle and became barricaded inside, creating an unusual and rapidly evolving problem involving access to police equipment, communications, and potentially weapons.



This case study examines the negotiation from the perspective of the first responding crisis negotiator, who initially communicated with the suspect over the police radio while responding to the scene and simultaneously

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performed roles normally divided among a negotiation team. The presentation follows the transition from radio communication to face-to-face negotiation, the challenges of establishing trust with a subject deeply distrustful of law enforcement and coordinating negotiation efforts with multiple responding tactical teams.

Through the incident's progression and peaceful resolution, participants will examine practical lessons in rapport, credibility, negotiator decision-making, tactical communication, and when negotiation and tactical action can work together to bring an incident to a safe conclusion.

Learning Points, by the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Apply negotiation principles in unconventional environments where normal communication methods, staffing, and negotiation-team structures are unavailable.
- Recognize and manage competing responsibilities when a negotiator must temporarily function as primary negotiator, coach, intelligence resource, and liaison with incident command.
- Use transparency and tactical coordination to build credibility, including preparing a subject for

tactical actions that could otherwise increase fear, uncertainty, or distrust.

- Evaluate the risks associated with promises, implied commitments, and deceptive rapport-building techniques, particularly when negotiating with a subject who already distrusts law enforcement.
- Identify indicators that rapport and trust are developing and use those indicators to assess opportunities for behavioral change and movement toward resolution.
- Integrate negotiation and tactical operations, recognizing when time, reduced emotional intensity, established rapport, and carefully coordinated tactical action can work together to achieve a peaceful surrender.

**SALEM 2027
41st ANNUAL TRAINING
SEMINAR & HNT
COMPETITION
SALEM CONVENTION CENTER
& THE GRAND HOTEL
APRIL 25-28, 2027**

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