Western States Hostage Negotiators' Association
41st Annual Training Seminar

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Salem Convention Center, Salem, Oregon

THE MARION COUNTY REGIONAL NEGOTIATION TEAM
WELCOMES YOU TO SALEM, OREGON

THIS IS WORK-IN-PROGRESS

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.

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.

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.

Presentation 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 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.

James Sylvester

Face-To-Face Negotiation with a Suicidal Inmate

In 2021 an inmate exited his cell, walked to the second story of his housing unit, tied a sheet around both his neck and the railing, then climbed over the edge. This presentation utilizes body-worn camera footage to discuss the challenges of a face-to-face negotiation within a detention facility involving an inmate facing severe charges in a specialized housing unit. Topics addressed include time management, non-responder negotiations, scene management, challenges from a jail environment, emotional dysregulation, and use of a third-party intermediary.

Key lessons focus on reducing unnecessary stimulation, maintaining clear communication and command structure, and recognizing that a subject who is not responding may still be listening and processing.

This incident reinforced that successful negotiations are often less about saying the perfect thing and more about creating the conditions for the subject to regain emotional control.

When this incident occurred, Deputy Sylvester was a new member of the HNT and gathered intelligence on the inmate. The inmate's legal case was completed in January 2024.

James Sylvester is an active Deputy with the Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) with approximately ten (10) years of law enforcement experience. Throughout his career at WCSO, Deputy Sylvester has worked on the following primary assignments:

- Detention – Assigned to direct supervision housing units ranging from 75 to 115 inmates at a time.
- Detention Services Unit Veterans' Barracks – Structured and ran a program within the jail that assisted Veteran inmates connect with services afforded to them through their military service. Additionally, the Veterans' Barracks focused on reducing recidivism through positive peer support and sobriety.
- District Court Bailiff – Provided a safe a secure Court environment while also addressing calls for service relating to Court matters and the immediate area.
- Patrol Deputy – Spent approximately three (3) years working graveyard shift.

In addition to his primary assignments, he has served as a pilot on the Highspeed Aerial Watch and Knowledge (HAWK) Drone program, Honor Guard, defensive tactics instructor, Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) instructor, and Field Training Officer. Deputy Sylvester has been a member of the WCSO Hostage Negotiations Team since 2020 and was elected as the Western States Hostage Negotiators' Association District 3 Representative in 2026.

Prior to law enforcement, Deputy Sylvester was a Navy Hospital Corpsman assigned to the First Marine Division, and he holds a Bachelor of Science from Georgetown University in Washington D.C.
Outside of law enforcement, Deputy Sylvester donates his time to crisis counseling on Crisis Text Line and helps coach youth wrestling. Deputy Sylvester and his wife Alaina live in Reno, NV and have three children.

Sean Pollack

Inspector Sean Pollock is a retired member of the Winnipeg Police Service, having completed 24 years of service. During the course of his career, he has worked in patrol, community support, specialized investigations, traffic, and spent time at the training division. He was promoted to Inspector in 2022 and commanded both the Operational Support Division, overseeing all special operations portfolios for the Winnipeg Police Service, as well as the Records and Reports Management Division. Inspector Pollock joined the Crisis Negotiation Unit in 2011 and was deployed to a variety of crisis incidents, including suicidal individuals, barricaded subjects, and high-risk warrants. He is a qualified Critical Incident Commander and was an adjunct faculty member with the Canadian Police College until the time of his retirement. Inspector Pollock is a member of the instructing cadre for the National Tactical Officers Association as well as a consultant for public and private organizations related to conflict resolution and crisis communication. He was awarded the Excellence in Law Enforcement Award by the Province of Manitoba as well as the Exemplary Service Award by the Governor General of Canada. Inspector Pollock is the author of "Answering the Call - Lessons Learned as a Crisis Negotiator."

Dynamics of Team Leadership in Crisis Negotiations

This session examines the role of the Negotiation Liaison Officer (NLO) across the pre-incident, active, and post-incident phases of a critical incident, and clarifies the distinction between the Negotiation Team Leader and the NLO within the command structure. Using the SMEAC framework and worked command-triangle dialogue examples, the session explores the NLO's working relationship with the Critical Incident Commander and Tactical Liaison Officer, the use of a psychological consultant, and the difficult leadership decisions team leaders and NLOs face — including replacing a primary negotiator and advising command toward tactical intervention.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Differentiate the roles of the Negotiation Team Leader and the Negotiation Liaison Officer within the command structure
- Apply the SMEAC framework to structure negotiation input at the Incident Command Triangle
- Practice constructing timely, options-focused updates for the Critical Incident Commander
- Navigate high-stakes leadership decisions, including replacing a primary negotiator and recommending tactical escalation
- Establish debrief and member-wellbeing practices spanning the hot wash, operational debrief, and long-term follow-up

Alex Speldrich

Sergeant Alex Speldrich has worked for the Lane County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) since early 2014. He has held positions in corrections, court security/transport, and main office patrol. He is currently assigned to the LCSO Creswell Contract as the supervising Sergeant and supervises the LCSO Peer Support Team. Alex joined the Lane County Multi-Agency Crisis Negotiations Team in 2019 and took the role of Team-Lead in 2023.

In September of 2022, his team responded to a domestic violence hostage situation at an in-home daycare. As this incident rapidly evolved, numerous unconventional negotiation efforts were attempted and risks had to be taken to reach a resolution to try to save a woman's life.

Learning Points

- Continuity of communication using different methods simultaneously: in-person and by phone.
- Utilizing other agencies for brainstorming and consultation.
- Considering outside-the-box negotiation strategies.

Tara Simmelink

Tara Simmelink is currently employed with the Pierce County Sheriff's Office. She has spent three decades working across a wide range of operational and investigative assignments. Her experience includes patrol, Special Investigations Unit (SIU), Domestic Violence, and detective assignments in Homicide, Missing Persons, Robbery and Special Assault. She has served as a Deputy, Detective, Detective Sergeant and now a Lieutenant in Patrol.

In addition to her primary assignments, Tara has served in several specialty and collateral roles, including Field Training Officer, Peer Support, Mobile Field Force, and Air Operations. She joined the SWAT team in 2010 as a crisis negotiator and currently serves as the Crisis Negotiation Team Leader. Over the course of her career, she has responded to hundreds of SWAT callouts and brings extensive experience in high-risk, emotionally charged incidents. Her approach to negotiation emphasizes communication, teamwork, and continue growth from evaluating every incident. As an instructor and presenter, Tara is enthusiastic about sharing practical lessons learned, fostering resilience within negotiation teams, and preparing negotiators for both successful resolutions and the realities of undesired outcomes.

Presentation Synopsis - What Do You Consider a Win?

During a tense barricaded incident involving a murder suspect actively firing at tactical personnel, negotiators worked through shifting dynamics, communication barriers, and mounting pressure in an effort to bring the event to a peaceful resolution.

Told from the perspective of the negotiation team leader and primary negotiator, this debrief explores not only the operational side of crisis negotiations, but also the emotional weight carried by those tasked with building dialogue in the middle of violence and uncertainty.

This presentation concludes with lessons learned, discussion points for crisis response teams, and an honest conversation about the personal and emotional toll these incidents can carry long after the scene is secured.

Not every incident ends the way we want. But every incident leaves us with something to learn.

John Hinterreiter

John Hinterreiter is a Senior Agent with the Lakewood Police Department in Lakewood, Colorado, with 20 years of law enforcement experience. Currently assigned to the Patrol Division, he has served for more than 12 years as a Crisis Negotiator with the West Metro SWAT Team, where he contributes as a Team Leader and CNT Field Trainer. Throughout his career, John has served in several specialized assignments, including the Lakewood Police Department Special Enforcement Team and the Colorado Violent Offender Task Force, where he was specially deputized by the United States Marshals Service. His additional experience includes service with the Police Honor Guard, Field Training Unit, Speaker's Bureau, and McGruff handler.

Recognizing a gap in traditional crisis negotiation training involving non-responsive barricaded subjects, John developed *Loud-Hail: Bullhorn Instruction and Verbal Strategies*. Since its creation, he has had the privilege of presenting the seminar to crisis negotiation teams and conferences at the local, state, and national levels.

Loud-Hail: Bullhorn Instruction and Verbal Strategies

Crisis negotiators are trained extensively in the art of communication, but what happens when the subject refuses to communicate back? Establishing dialogue with a non-responsive barricaded subject presents a unique challenge, and effective loud-hail communication can play a critical role in breaking that silence. Historically, the bullhorn has been viewed primarily as a tool for making announcements, serving warrants, or issuing commands. *Loud-Hail* challenges that traditional approach by treating amplified communication as an extension of the negotiation process rather than simply a means of giving orders.
This course provides crisis negotiators with practical techniques for developing and delivering effective loud-hail messages during one-sided communication. Participants will explore verbal strategies that incorporate active listening principles and the Behavioral Influence Stairway Model, while learning how message content, delivery, timing, and repetition can be used to encourage engagement and move a non-responsive subject toward meaningful dialogue.

Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Recognize the challenges of one-sided communication and identify opportunities to use loud hailing as a negotiation tool when subjects refuse to engage in traditional dialogue.
- Apply principles of the Behavioral Influence Stairway Model and active listening to develop messages that encourage rapport, cooperation, and communication, even without a verbal response.
- Identify effective loud-hail strategies, including message construction, word selection, tone, timing, and repetition, to improve the delivery and effectiveness of amplified communication.
- Differentiate between command-driven announcements and negotiation-focused messaging, recognizing when each approach may be appropriate during a critical incident.
- Develop practical loud-hail messages that support crisis negotiation objectives and encourage non-responsive subjects to engage in meaningful dialogue.

Brian Hardy - Sam Posthuma

Lieutenant Sam Posthuma

Lieutenant Sam Posthuma is a 19-year law enforcement veteran with the Albany Police Department in Oregon. He currently serves as Team Leader for the Linn County Regional SWAT Team. Throughout his career, he has served in patrol, narcotics investigations, undercover operations, traffic enforcement, and supervisory leadership, including as a Patrol Sergeant.
A highly experienced tactical operator and instructor, Lieutenant Posthuma is a Firearms Instructor, Defensive Tactics Instructor, and Use of Force Instructor. His tactical experience includes serving as a SWAT entry operator, breacher, sniper, sniper team leader, and tactical supervisor. His experience leading tactical teams through high-risk incidents, combined with his background in instruction and leadership, gives him a practical perspective on how tactical operations and crisis negotiation can work together to achieve safe, coordinated resolutions.

Lieutenant Brian Hardy

Lieutenant Brian Hardy is a 15-year law enforcement veteran and FBI-trained crisis negotiator with the Linn County Sheriff's Office in Oregon, where he serves as Assistant Team Leader for the Linn County Regional SWAT Team's Crisis Negotiation Team. He began his career as a reserve officer and served full time with the Woodburn Police Department before joining Linn County, where he worked patrol, the Traffic Team, and Mountain Patrol before his promotion to Patrol Sergeant.
Today he serves as Lieutenant over Patrol Programs, overseeing the agency's special patrol teams, including Mountain Patrol, Marine Patrol, the Traffic Team, and Contract Cities. He also supervises the Multi-Agency Investigation Team. That range of experience, from patrol to leadership, shapes how he approaches crisis negotiation as a team effort built on structure, adaptability, and close coordination with tactical operations.

Four Hours on 4th Avenue: A Courthouse Standoff

Allen Dude was due in court that morning. He never made it inside.

On April 20, 2026, Dude, who was due in court on serious felony charges, parked directly in front of the Linn County Courthouse. As officers approached, they saw what appeared to be a pipe bomb in his hand. Within minutes, the courthouse, city hall, and the surrounding blocks of downtown Albany were locked down. For the next four hours, the standoff played out in full public view on the county's own front steps.

This case study examines the incident from both sides of the operation. Lieutenant Hardy served as Assistant Team Leader inside the Negotiation Operations Center, working out of borrowed building space, while Lieutenant Posthuma led the tactical team on scene from the BearCat armored vehicle. Negotiators used nearly every available tool, including recorded messages from third-party intermediaries, drone support, and a subject who repeatedly asked to speak with his children. The conversation moved one step forward and two steps back for hours, with every gain in rapport followed by a setback.

Together, Lieutenant Hardy and Lieutenant Posthuma will walk through how negotiators and tactical teams navigated those highs and lows, what worked, what did not, and what it ultimately took to bring the standoff to a close.

Derek Jensen – Nicole Sebo

Derek Jensen is the Supervisory Special Agent overseeing the Transnational Organized Crime Squad in the FBI's Las Vegas Field Office. Since arriving in June 2026, he has led efforts to identify, disrupt, and dismantle criminal networks operating across international boundaries.

Before joining the Las Vegas Division, Jensen spent seven years in Eugene, Oregon, where he investigated a broad range of threats, including transnational organized crime, white-collar offenses, public corruption, and terrorism. His diverse casework provided a strong foundation for his current leadership role.

Jensen became a Certified Crisis Negotiator in November 2021 and served on the Portland Crisis Negotiation Team throughout his tenure in Oregon, rising to Team Leader in August 2025. During that time, he completed multiple advanced negotiation trainings, instructed more than ten forty-hour crisis negotiation courses across Oregon, and taught a forty-hour course in South Korea in August 2024. He continues his service as a crisis negotiator with the Las Vegas team.

Kidnap for Ranson

We will go over a Kidnap for Ranson that occurred in April 2026 in Vancouver, Oregon. The kidnapping went on for about 2 weeks and required around the clock support by FBI Seattle & Portland for several days. We will go over the events that occurred but also the coordination that was required at the case agent level, team leader level, field office, and headquarters/international support. Hoping to educate the audience to KFRs, and the steps to follow the next time one occurs.

Nick Hunter

Synopsis Pending

Sheriff Nick Hunter began his law enforcement career in 2001 after graduating from Willamette University with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. Starting as a Reserve Deputy and working in the Marion County Jail, he joined the City of Independence as a full-time Police Officer in 2004. There, he served as a Field Training Officer and later as a detective on the Polk Interagency Narcotics Team (POINT). In 2008, Hunter returned to Marion County as an Enforcement Deputy, rising to Sergeant in 2012 and Lieutenant in 2015. As a Lieutenant, he commanded the SWAT team and served in both the Enforcement and Operations Divisions. In June 2023, he was appointed Sheriff by the Marion County Board of Commissioners and was formally elected in November 2024 to serve as the 41st Sheriff of Marion County. -Sheriff Hunter is deeply committed to community engagement and education. He is a National Instructor in Human Performance and De-escalation, and he actively works to develop the next generation of public safety professionals. He serves on multiple boards and committees, collaborating with community leaders to enhance public safety and foster positive relationships between law enforcement and the community.

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