

**Western States Hostage Negotiators' Association
41st Annual training seminar**

**2027 Featured Presenters - April 25, 2027, to April 28, 2027
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.

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 approximately 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 and 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
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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

PENDING



John Hinterreiter

John Hinterreiter is a senior agent with the Lakewood Police Department, where he has served for over 17 years. He has been a crisis negotiator on the West Metro SWAT Team for nearly a decade and also worked on the LPD Special Enforcement Team, hailing special deputation to the U.S. Marshal's Service for the last six years. He marches on the Honor Guard and confabulates in the Speaker's Bureau. Additionally, John flexes his creative juices by writing and illustrating a weekly newspaper comic called Ajax'd.



Scott Mumey

PENDING



Nicole Sebo

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Derek Jensen

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Nick Hunter

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.

STAY ALIVE
DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!