

Sacramento Police Department – 2320
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS Course – 29540

Statement of Purpose: This course will provide students with the minimum topics of Strategic Communications required in the POST Perishable Skills Program (PSP). The intent of this course is to improve the student's ability to generate voluntary compliance through the art of persuasion and utilizing the tools of interpersonal and tactical communication. This course consists of practical hands-on strategic communications training for in-service personnel.

I. Course Goals and Objectives

a. Goals

- i. Safety
- ii. Enhanced professionalism
- iii. Decrease in complaints
- iv. Decrease in liability
- v. Lessen personal stress

b. Objectives

i. The student will:

1. Demonstrate basic components of communication skills and techniques.
2. Demonstrate the importance of listening and persuasion skills as they relate to effective strategic communication.
3. Demonstrate the skills needed to communicate effectively.
4. Demonstrate a minimum standard of strategic communication skills with every technique and exercise, to include:
 - a. Officer Safety
 - b. Listening/Persuasion
 - c. Judgment and Decision Making
 - d. De-escalation, Verbal Commands
 - e. Effectiveness under Stress Conditions
5. Discuss:
 - a. Reasonableness of contact (Why)
 - b. Knowledge of person to be contacted (Who)
 - c. Intent of event: (Why)
 - i. Probation/Parole
 - ii. Crime in Progress
 - iii. 981/Consensual Contact
 - d. Desired outcome: (What)
 - i. Resolved on scene/ Arrest
 - ii. Services offered/accepted
 - e. Perceived law enforcement biases

II. Officer Safety

IV (a)

a. Control the Environment

- i. Tactical Pause
- ii. Slow Down
- iii. Gather Information
- iv. Develop a plan

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- v. Time + Distance = Options
- b. Make Sound Decisions
 - i. What's important right now?
 - ii. Set priorities
 - iii. Think through your choices

III. Understanding Escalation vs De-Escalation is Affected by Communication Strategies **IV (b)**

- a. Professionalism
 - i. Stay in control of your emotions and keep your ego in check
 - 1. The more the ego is involved, the more difficult the situation
 - 2. The less ego, the more influence
 - ii. Appropriate Language
 - 1. What you say
 - 2. How you say it
 - 3. How communications affect the outcome
- b. How you treat others
 - i. Golden Rule – Treat others how you want to be treated
 - ii. Platinum Rule – Treat others the way they want to be treated
- c. Four Tenets of Procedural Justice
 - i. Voice
 - ii. Neutrality
 - iii. Respectful treatment
 - iv. Trustworthiness

IV. Communication Elements **IV (c, d, e)**

- a. Phases of Communication
 - i. Approach – Impact of physicality
 - ii. Greeting – Initiating the conversation
 - iii. Engagement – Strategies to promote communication
 - iv. Adaptation – Being flexible
 - v. Repair – Re-establishing rapport
 - vi. Incident closure - How we end a contact today could influence a future contact
- b. Message Delivery
 - i. Content
 - ii. Tone/Voice
 - iii. Non-Verbals
- c. Active Listening
 - i. Listening with all senses
 - ii. Why is listening important?
 - 1. The most fundamental component of communication skill
 - 2. Active process that takes a conscious decision
 - 3. More time listening than speaking
 - iii. Benefits of Active Listening
 - 1. Builds Trust

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2. Broadens perspective
 - a. Strengthens your patience
 - b. Makes you approachable
 - c. Increases competence and knowledge
 - d. Saves time and money
 - e. Helps detect and solve problems
- iv. What makes a good listener: Listening vs. Hearing
 1. Non-verbal and Verbal signs of Active Listening skills
 - a. Non-verbal
 - i. Smile
 - ii. Eye contact
 - iii. Posture
 - iv. No distractions
 - b. Verbal
 - i. Positive reinforcement
 - ii. Remembering
 - iii. Questioning
 - iv. Clarification
 2. Listening Styles
 - a. People-Oriented
 - b. Action or Task-Oriented
 - c. Content
 - d. Time
- v. Examples of Active Listening/Questioning Techniques
 1. Paraphrasing
 2. Verbal Affirmation
 3. Opened ended questions
 4. Asking specific questions
 5. Summarizing Questions
 6. Effective Pauses
- vi. Barriers to Effective Listening
 1. Attention Span
 2. Receiver Biases
 3. Listening Apprehension
- vii. Tips for Effective Listening
 1. Eye contact
 2. Attentive and relaxed
 3. Open mind
 4. Don't interrupt
 5. Clarifying questions
 6. Summarize
 7. Try to feel what the speaker is feeling
 8. Regular feedback
 9. Attention to non-verbal cues
- viii. Tips for Active Listening
 1. Affirmations

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2. Open ended questions
 3. Mirroring
 4. Paraphrasing
 5. Avoiding “You” messages
 6. Effective pauses
 7. Listen to understand not to respond
- d. Empathy
- i. Empathy vs. Sympathy
 1. Empathy – The ability to understand and share the feelings of another
 2. Sympathy – Feelings of sorrow and pity for someone else’s misfortune
 - ii. Establish Rapport
- e. Questioning techniques
- i. Intentional closed-ended questions
 - ii. Open ended questions
 - iii. Question Types
 1. Fact-Finding
 2. Leading
 3. Opinion-Seeking
- f. Persuasion **IV (f)**
- i. Rational appeal
 - ii. Personal appeal
 - iii. Ethical appeal
- V. People with Disabilities **IV (g)**
- a. Individuals with physical, mental health, developmental, or intellectual disabilities may have difficulty communicating, understanding, or complying with commands from peace officers.
 - b. Recognize appropriate methods of communication with people experiencing:
 - i. Mental Illness
 - ii. Substance Use Disorders
 - iii. Intellectual Disabilities
 - iv. Physical Disabilities
 - v. Emotional Distress
 - c. Potential Strategies
 - i. Pace
 - ii. Tone/Voice
 - iii. Reduce distractions
 - iv. Content
 - v. Non-Verbal
 - d. Special Relationships/Community Caretaking
- VI. Team Communications during a Critical Incident **IV (h)**
- a. Coordinated effort
 - i. Planned Response (when feasible)

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- ii. One voice
 - 1. Single point of contact with subject(s)
 - 2. Single point of contact with dispatch
 - iii. Force options
 - iv. Continuous Assessment
 - b. Potential Resources
 - i. Mental Health Resources
 - ii. Community Resources
 - c. Debriefs
 - i. Effective - examples
 - ii. Ineffective - examples
- VII. Event Prologue & Introduction to Crisis Decision-making Model (CDM)
- a. Event Prologue (Defined)
 - i. An opening to a story that establishes the setting and gives background details.
 - b. Goals of Event Prologue:
 - i. Increased use of BWC
 - ii. Establish the setting for a contact
 - iii. Give reason for contact
 - iv. Safety: Officer/Public
 - v. Enhance Professionalism
 - 1. Use appropriate language
 - vi. Decrease complaints
 - 1. Use of inappropriate language
 - c. Implicit Bias (Defined)
 - i. Unconscious attitudes/stereotypes that affect:
 - 1. Understanding
 - 2. Actions
 - 3. Decisions
- VIII. Class Exercises / Student Evaluations / Testing IV (i)
- a. TacCom Refresher Quiz
 - b. **Learning Activity:** Students will be provided various scenarios in which tactical communication and active listening skills will be utilized and demonstrated. The instructor will proctor the exercise and provide direct/immediate feedback.