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“School Resource Officer Response to the Active Shooter/Active Assailant”

Presentation Description:

School attacks have occurred in the United States since 1764. However, it has just been in the last 20 years that school shootings have increased significantly in frequency and lethality. School shootings have now become a commonplace event, occurring in cities large and small throughout the United States. Since the 1999 Columbine school shooting, there have been more than 78 *fatal* school shootings in the United States and more than 600 averted school attacks. Public safety agencies and schools are now placing an increased focus on prevention and response to these deadly events. The term “active assailant” includes perpetrators who utilize other attack tactics (such as explosives, knives, vehicles, fire, and so forth).

This powerful lecture will discuss many facets of school active shooter response. The active shooter history will be discussed, including the constant modification of active shooter attacks based on research the shooter(s) conducted. Research of the active shooter “stopwatch of death” will be discussed, emphasizing the criticality of rapid response. The profile of the active shooter will also be explored, including predictors based on age, race, academic history, and social status.

Research shows that active shooter events are rarely spontaneous and perpetrators plan and prepare their attack for days, months, and even years. Case study research of active shooter events finds that perpetrators actively study prior events so that they can thwart school security measures and public safety response. This lecture will review the ways these attacks were averted and the plans the perpetrators intended to carry out.

One of the most important aspects of active shooter prevention is the recognition of threat leakage. Threat leakage is the communication to a third party of the intent to do harm. Threat leakage is fact-based, dynamic, acute, and often accelerates as the attack approaches. Threat leakage frequently occurs in active shooter attacks, especially those attacks perpetrated by adolescents. Leakage is one of the best and most important predictors of an adolescent’s impending violent act. In this presentation, the concept of threat leakage will be explored. The leakage pathway of warning behavior is covered, including numerous real life examples of leakage in social media, diaries, school projects, and more. Numerous active shooter perpetrators will be discussed, and examples of each perpetrator’s threat leakage will be shown.

Presentation Objectives:

1. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will learn and discuss the history of school shootings in United States.
2. At the conclusion of this program, attendees can describe issues with profiling the active shooter.
3. At the conclusion of this program, attendees can describe the new technique for law enforcement and EMS integration to respond to a school shooter / active shooter.

4. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will learn and discuss the concept of threat leakage.
5. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to describe the seven steps in the leakage pathway of warning behavior.
6. At the conclusion of this program, attendees will be able to describe the various mediums for leakage, including spontaneous utterances, letters, emails, voice mails, blogs, internet postings, tweets, text messages, and diaries.

Resources Needed:

Classroom, computer, projector, audio

Time Needed:

Four to eight hours