

APRIL 2021

WSHNA

Boise is Happening!

From the Open Line Archives
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Circa 2000

It was Monday, December 6th, 1999 at 0500 hours. It was the first Monday after WTO. My pager goes off. I knew at that time of the morning it was either a drug buyer who had dialed wrong or it was a callout. It was a callout.

WTO was an emotional journey I had not experienced in my 22 years with the Seattle Police Department. I was still trying to get back to a normal sleep pattern. I woke up in the middle of the night Sunday night and could not get back to sleep. Then the pager went off. The information on the pager was that a homicide suspect had barricaded himself inside a residence with the two homicide victims still inside. He was armed and wanted the police to kill him.

When I arrived, what I remember most were the faces of those I had just spent a very grueling week with. Everyone was emotionally drained. You could see it in their eyes. You could sense it with their body language.

The suspect was intent on having a police officer kill him because he could not or would not do it himself. We all went to work quickly. I am definitely biased, but I feel our HNT unit is unsurpassed. We work so efficiently together. While one or our more experienced negotiators talked to the suspect on the phone, I talked with the brother and sister-in-law of the suspect. They were racing to the scene in North Seattle from Enumclaw. The suspect had called and told them

that he had killed another brother and another sister-in-law and that he now wanted the police to kill him.

The sister-in-law and brother begged me to not have us take any action until they got to the scene. The brother even at one point began to threaten me if anything did happen to his brother.

Things were happening at such a fast and frenzied pace. I think we all knew from our experience that the suspect was intent on his "suicide by cop" plan.

It happened so quickly. Almost simultaneously I heard the suspect on the phone saying he was coming out and then the gun shots and glass from the mirror of the SWAT "peacekeeper" breaking. I remember thinking the glass breaking was way too close to me as I dove for cover. I then heard the return of gunfire from us.

The officers involved with the shooting that day were quickly isolated. As they walked by me it seemed like all the blood in their faces had drained away. Their eyes were glazed over. Ten days in hell with WTO had been continued for one more day.

We had done everything correct. We followed procedure. Still, a man was lying dead in the street and we were all a part of it. We did not need to pull the trigger to know we were all a part of it. It did not matter if we were the dispatchers who took the call or the officers who took the shot. Everyone was affected by what had just occurred.

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS
MANAGEMENT DEBRIEFING TEAM

The other team I am a part of besides our Hostage Negotiating Team is the Critical Incident Stress Management Debriefing Team. The stress debriefing, (CISD), is an organized approach to the management of stress responses to emergency services.

The model we use is called the “Mitchell Model.” Dr. Jeffery Mitchell developed the model and is a clinical Psychologist. He is also a former Firefighter/EMT. He saw a need to debrief individuals who were involved in a critical incident when he was working as a Firefighter/EMT.

All on our team have been trained by Dr. Norm Mar (Seattle Police Department Staff Psychologist) and then are required to attend three CISD sessions as an observer only. We attempt to have at least 4 debriefers in the CISD. We debrief incidents that occur not from a tactical point of view, but rather for the mental and emotional wellbeing of the individuals involved.

A critical incident is any significant emotional event that has the power, because of its own nature or because of the circumstances in which it occurs, to cause unusual psychological distress in healthy, normal people. The following are examples of critical incidents:

- Life threatening situations such as shootings, physical assaults, or exposure to disease.
- Disasters that are either natural or man-made, such as earthquakes, airplane crashes, volcanic eruption, building collapses or major car crashes.
- Unusual or bizarre sensory experiences such as child deaths/injuries, or personal identification with an event.
- Instances of extreme public scrutiny through media coverage, adverse public or peer opinion.

During the CISD the tone must be positive, supportive, and understanding. Everyone has feelings that should be shared and accepted. The main rules in a CISD, no one criticizes, all listen to what was, or is, going on inside each other.

The formal CISD follows this general format:

INTRODUCTORY PHASE

The facilitator begins by introducing himself/herself. The facilitator then describes the rules of the process:

- This is not a critique.
- We make a confidentiality pact that everything that is said stays in the room.
- No food, smoking, or chew.
- Participants stay for the entire CISD (2-6 hours).
- Shut off all pagers, radios, cell phones.
- No note taking or recording devices are permitted.
- Participation is not mandatory. You do not have to talk.
- No observers. Only those here who were a part of the incident are to be there.
- All are on a first name basis. No ranks or titles.

FACT PHASE

This phase is used to find out the facts of the incident. We try to start at the beginning. Possibly with the person who took the 9-1-1 call, then the first to arrive, the second to arrive and so on.

We look for these questions to be answered; what did you see? What did you hear? What did you do? What did you touch or feel?

We then try to compare perspectives. This is helpful for those who did not see everything or possibly were not directly at the scene like the dispatchers. Many times, filling in the blanks of

an incident assists those who did not see everything that occurred.

FEELING PHASE

Once all participants have shared sufficient information to bring the incident to a vivid memory the facilitator begins to ask feeling oriented questions. How are you feeling now? How did you feel when it happened? Have you ever felt anything like this before?

The facilitator makes sure no one gets left out of the discussion and that no one dominates the discussion at the expense of others. People will most often discuss their fears, anxieties, concerns, and feelings of guilt, frustration, anger, and ambivalence during this phase.

SYMPTOM PHASE

This phase of the debriefing concerns itself most with answering the question, “What unusual things are you experiencing now?” and “Has your life changed in any way since this incident?” The participants are encouraged to discuss what is going on now in their homes and in their jobs because of their experiences.

TEACHING PHASE

The facilitator takes this opportunity to teach the group something about responses to stress. The emphasis is on describing how normal and natural it is for emergency service people to experience a variety of signs, symptoms, and emotional reactions to the critical incident they lived through.

RE-ENTRY PHASE

This final phase seeks to wrap up loose ends, answer any outstanding questions, and provide final reassurances. Sometimes this is the time to make a plan of action. For example, in one case where a drunk driver had killed several people, EMS and Law Enforcement personnel made a plan to appear in uniform at the trial. They were going to do this in protest of light sentences for drunk drivers.

Summary comments are then offered, and the personnel are advised about getting additional help should they need it. The facilitator then repeats the confidentiality agreement.

I am not saying that the post-incident get-together with others and having an “adult beverage” does not have its place as well. I have learned many valuable things from Uncle Bruce at these get together sessions. I am suggesting this other debriefing is needed as well.

The formal CISD should be mandatory for all personnel involved in the scene. Currently the Seattle Fire Department requires all their personnel to attend. Attending a CISD is optional for those in the Seattle Police Department.

We need to take care of each other as team members, as fellow negotiators, as fellow officers, and as fellow first responders. I have seen its benefits as a debriefer as well as being a part of a CISD myself, including the CISD following the incident on December 6th. At this CISD we had members of our HNT, SWAT, Fire Department, and the SPD Communications Division in attendance.

Find out what your agency offers. It is worth the time.



Boise is Happening

BRING A BASKET

Years ago, to boost our raffle sales (raffle money goes to the committee’s charity of choice) we asked each agency to bring a ‘gift basket’ that represented their agency and their area. The baskets started out being just that, a standard gift basket (department patches, some cuisine from the area, some tickets to a local event, wine from local winery, beer from local brewery, etc....) Well, over the years, people

became competitive, and the gift baskets became anything but. We have had pedal-driven police cars, wagons, milk crates, wheelbarrows, etc. Last year we had an agency, and their 'basket' was worth nearly \$5,000. Several other ideas: wooden chests, coin holders with the thin blue line flag as its design, technology basket, the ideas are endless.

Do not be intimidated, just bring something that represents your area and your agency. It is all in fun and all for charity. If you are asking the community for donations and they want a tax number, email me and I will send our WSHNA tax numbers. We are a 501(C)(3) tax exempt organization and donations of items/money are usually tax deductible (consult your accountant).

HYATT
PLACE
HOTEL



Use the link on the Seminar Page to navigate to the Hyatt Place Hotel negotiated WSHNA rate. We have some rooms left to fill on our contract and we would really like to fill those spots. It is a short walk to the Boise Convention Centre.

PLANNING IS NOT THE SAME AS PRE-COVID

If you check-out the web site at www.wshna.com and navigate to the 2021 Seminar Page you will see that Seminar Registration, HNT Competition Registration, & Hotel links are all up & running. A working schedule is also posted and will be updated as we continue planning.

Current events have changed how we approach the planning of an event. Most notably, our hotel room block. In years past we would contract with the host hotel and maybe an overflow hotel for a large number of rooms at special

negotiated prices. Until we have the virus in our rear-view mirror, this is not the case. We have contracted with two hotels, but for a small number of rooms. We sidestepped any major financial burdens in 2020 because a pandemic was declared, thus invoking 'force majeure'. It is unlikely this will happen in 2021 so WSHNA needs to protect themselves and not enter into large contracts. So, when our block of rooms is sold out (some already are) you will need to take the initiative and find the best price you can, either at the host hotel or nearby. (I heard the host hotel is still giving the Government rate.) There are numerous quality hotels within walking distance of the convention center.

Downtown Boise is an incredibly fun place with many bars & restaurants. Do not hesitate to call me if you have issues.

TRANSFERS & CANCELLATIONS

We understand that our profession has some scheduling challenges (court, special assignments, unplanned events, unusual occurrences, etc...). Therefore, registrations are transferrable provided you notify WSHNA via Bruce Wind at brucewind@comcast.net. Notification is important so that the new attendee will have the proper name tag, registration gifts, lunches, attendance certificate, training credit, etc.

Registration cancellations less than 45-days prior to the beginning of the conference will not be refunded. Rather, a voucher for the following year's conference may be issued at the discretion of the Executive Board. Any difference in registration fee from the prior year will be paid by the attendee/agency. The 45-day limit is set so that proper planning can be completed for an event of this size to include mandated health directives by local & state governments.

**TIME TO GET BACK TO IN-PERSON
TRAINING**

Boise, Idaho May 2-5, 2021

*The Idaho Department of Correction is hosting
in cooperation with Idaho Law Enforcement
Agencies*

*HNT Competition at the State Capital on May
2nd, 2021*

(teams are full, however still filling ad hoc team)

*Seminar Registration & Check-In on May 2nd,
2021*

*In-Class Training Seminar on May 3rd, 4th, 5th,
2021*

*at Boise Centre
(hotels listed on our web site)*

Networking & Social Events - All Evenings



WSHNA 36th Annual
Training Seminar

Spring 2022

WHERE WILL IT BE?

Your Board of Directors will have a big
announcement in Boise. It will be exciting!

**WSHNA WILL BUY YOUR TEAM LUNCH
FOR YOUR NEXT
TRAINING DAY.**



[Microsoft Word - Request
for Lunch Funds Ver. 1.7
\(wshna.com\)](#)



Our 2021 WSHNA CHARITY
[Advocates Against Family Violence](#)

