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Police Hostage and Crisis Negotiation Training: Foci, Protocols and Best Practice

Principles

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Abstract

The current chapter attempts to provide insight into the current position of hostage and crisis negotiation training for police departments/law enforcement officers. The chapter presents a synthesis of the brief origins of police negotiator training balanced by the current status quo of negotiator training from a variety of international perspectives. The chapter highlights the various training protocols that are in place along with the extant curricula and foci in terms of content coverage for training packages. The chapter finishes by discussing the best practice principles that have been consistently identified within the negotiation literature and making several recommendations for those delivering, designing, and taking part in negotiation training packages, with the intention of ensuring that negotiators display operational readiness for deployments. Achieving this outcome is vital to ensuring that negotiators perform effectively in their role and thereby saving lives in the process.

Keywords: hostage and crisis negotiation, hostage negotiation, crisis negotiation, police negotiation, police negotiator training, crisis negotiator training, hostage negotiator training

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Introduction and Chapter Synopsis

Hostage and crisis negotiation (hereafter “negotiation”) is one tactical option available to police incident commanders when dealing with critical incidents (Grubb et al., 2021) and the application of negotiation techniques to such incidents has been consistently demonstrated to produce lifesaving and injury limiting results in a variety of contexts (Grubb et al., 2019a; Hammer, 2007; Noesner, 1999; Regini, 2002; Vecchi et al., 2019). Negotiation has been conceptualised as “law enforcement’s most effective nonlethal weapon” (Soskis & Van Zandt, 1986, p. 423); with data from negotiation databases maintained internationally attesting to this claim and verifying the technique’s effectiveness. Recent data taken from the Hostage and Barricade Database System (HOBAS) operated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (in April 2021), for example, revealed that 97.0% of cases were resolved without injury to officers or bystanders, 80.5% were resolved without injury to victims, and 83.0% were resolved without injury to the subject (National Council of Negotiation Associations [NCNA] & Federal Bureau of Investigations Crisis Negotiation Unit [FBI CNU], 2021). Similarly, data from the United Kingdom (UK) national negotiator deployment database found that 90.0% of cases were resolved without injury to the subject, based on data taken from two English police forces (Grubb, 2020). In line with these figures, it is accepted within the international law enforcement community that “statistically, negotiations successfully resolve most incidents” (Noesner, 1999, p. 13). However, to consistently obtain success within negotiations, it is vital that hostage and crisis negotiators (hereafter “negotiators”) receive appropriate training. This proposition applies both in terms of *initial* and *maintenance* training programmes; a concept echoing Greenstone’s claim in 1995 (p. 279) that “the training of hostage negotiators can be the determining factor in the successful resolution of the hostage and barricade situations confronting most municipal police departments today”. The current chapter will synthesise and discuss some of the salient themes from the literature regarding negotiator training,

including 1) *what* negotiators are and should be trained on; 2) *how* negotiators are trained, and 3) the key contemporary and future issues faced by the discipline.

Negotiator Training: Origins and Current Protocols

The use of police officers trained as negotiators was pioneered by the New York Police Department (NYPD) and catalysed by the work of Detective Harvey Schlossberg and Lieutenant Frank Bolz who developed an approach to hostage incident resolution based on peaceful intervention through communication (Braten et al., 2016, as cited in Thompson et al., 2022). In 1973, the NYPD started using detectives trained as negotiators in hostage and barricade incidents, with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) going on to develop and implement their own hostage negotiation programme (Hammer, 2007). Negotiator training has historically involved a combination of didactic academic inputs, critical review/analysis of previous incidents, and simulation exercises whereby trainees get the opportunity to play the role of the primary/secondary negotiator² in a variety of situations and receive feedback from instructors and peers based on reviewing videotapes of performance (Soskis & Van Zandt, 1986). The National Crisis Negotiation Course (NCNC) developed by the FBI in 1973 was originally designed to support federal agents involved in hostage, barricade, kidnapping and/or suicide situations. The 2-week course is comprehensive in content, with coverage of aspects such as “basic principles of negotiation, crisis and suicide intervention, abnormal psychology, third-party intermediaries, and equipment and technical considerations (e.g., use of communication systems, command posts)” (Van Hasselt et al., 2006, p. 62).

² The primary negotiator engages with/interacts directly with the subject (individual-in-crisis or hostage taker) and acts as the communicative link between the subject and the police. The secondary negotiator performs an advisory role by monitoring and recording negotiation progress and making suggestions to the primary negotiator to help guide the negotiations. The secondary negotiator also performs a support role to the primary negotiator by acting as a “sounding board” to cross-reference ideas and may also act as a conduit between the primary negotiator and on scene commanders to ensure that negotiators are implementing the desired strategy to resolve the incident (see Grubb, 2016; Grubb et al., 2022 for a lengthier description of negotiator cell roles).

Another early exemplar of negotiator training is outlined within Greenstone's (1995) book chapter, whereby he describes suggested training methods for small police departments in the form of 11 modules (areas of focus) that should be covered as part of an 80-hour negotiator training programme. Greenstone's chapter synthesises one of the first academic attempts at guiding police departments in terms of training content and formats for effective negotiator training. The learning ethos described is framed around a combination of academic content/inputs, critical review of negotiation deployments, and simulated exercises. The areas of concern were conceptualised as the following modules, with each module having a specific suggested time allocation in learning hours: *Basic hostage negotiations, Equipment, Policy, Team duties, Penal code, City/community interface, Practical exercises and command post practical problems, Negotiator stress survival, Review of previous non-departmental hostage situations, Review of departmental hostage situations, and Simulations with tactical team interface*. The basic premise and context for contemporary negotiation training remains the same, some 36 years on from Soskis & Van Zandt's (1986) assessment. Current specific negotiation training protocols, however, vary internationally and there are some disparities in the length of training and how it is delivered based on the delivering host agency. In the United States (US), for example, the FBI (federal) training programme, will differ from the individual municipal or state police department training, and there may then be further differences observed between city and sheriff police departments in the way their negotiators are trained.

In the US, the NCNA and FBI CNU (2018) recommended negotiation guidelines help to standardise the training to a degree by presenting recommendations regarding the required initial and recurrent training. However, it is worth noting that the guidelines are qualified by a statement indicating that the guidelines are "not intended to supersede individual department policies and procedures" (p. 9); suggesting that variation between departments is inevitable to some extent. The NCNA and FBI CNU guidelines suggest that officers should receive *initial*

training that includes “a minimum of 40 hours in a qualified course”, with the training including “basic concepts and techniques, abnormal psychology, intelligence gathering, assessment, crisis/suicide intervention, active listening skills, case studies, meaningful role-playing drills, and an incident management overview”. The guidelines also recommend annual *recurrent* negotiation training with negotiators receiving a minimum of 40 hours of “updated training and practice in order to maintain proficiency” (NCNA & FBI CNU, 2018, p. 4).

The NCNA (2020), who is widely recognised as representing the industry standard within the US (Davis, 2022), equally provides a crisis/hostage negotiation course suggested curriculum. This suggested curriculum can then be used to guide individual agency training programmes by highlighting the key areas of foci and intended learning outcomes for trainee negotiators to attain in order to promote negotiation proficiency. The course goals/objectives for the 40-hour training course are outlined and discussed within the negotiation training course curriculum section below.

Negotiation training within the US is delivered via various agencies (municipal, state, and federal) and is typically divided into *basic* and *advanced* training. These types of training are sometimes referred to differentially as Level 1, 2, and 3 training; with Level 1 & 2 forming the *basic* training (40 hours) and Level 3 forming the *advanced* training (40 hours) programmes (Davis, 2022). Training offered by the Institute of Police Technology and Management (IPTM) adopts a similar setup, however, programmes are designed as three 40-hour training packages (Level I [basic; 40 hours], II [advanced; 40 hours], and III [advanced; 40 hours]) allowing negotiators to complete up to 120 hours of training should this route be selected (IPTM, n.d. a). From a federal perspective, the FBI offer their own form of negotiation training that constitutes either a 40-hour (basic) or an 80-hour (advanced) block of instruction (with these training blocks being independent of each other) (Davis, 2022). Where training is completed and who delivers the training will depend on individual policies within police departments.

Most officers will complete training locally, with some officers having the opportunity to complete the FBI training course in lieu of, or in addition to the local training programme(s).

In the UK, there are currently five dedicated accredited negotiator training courses³. These courses include: 1) the *national* course⁴, 2) *RED centre* course⁵, 3) *counter terrorism* course, 4) *negotiator co-ordinator* course⁶, and 5) the *international* course⁷ (Surrey Police & Sussex Police, 2022). UK negotiator training has historically existed on an incremental spectrum, with the national (and previously regional) training programmes forming the basic training and the other specific scenario/advanced training acting as incremental advanced “bolt on” training courses for more experienced negotiators to develop more advanced skills (see Grubb, 2016; Grubb et al., 2022). The national course is designed to provide the foundations for negotiators to deploy to a range of hostage or crisis incidents, with an element of incrementality integrated into the training programme. The first week of the programme is designed to focus on crisis negotiations and crisis intervention skills; with the second week building in terms of complexity/scale and focusing more on hostage taking scenarios that often involve working collaboratively with Police Support Units (PSUs) and firearms teams (The Gibraltar Chronicle, 2022). Various police organisations have responsibility for delivering training for negotiators in the UK, with the Hostage and Crisis Negotiation Units (HCNU) based in the Metropolitan Police, Greater Manchester Police and Police Scotland playing the

³ All training programmes are one week in length, apart from the *national* course which is a two-week course.

⁴ This course is a two-week pass or fail course enabling successful delegates to deploy to incidents involving people-in-crisis and/or domestic barricade and incidents where a person other than the subject of the negotiation is at risk of harm. Nationally trained negotiators can also be deployed in support of terrorism incidents (terrorist siege) (Surrey Police & Sussex Police, 2022).

⁵ Training for support in cases of kidnap and ‘crimes in action’ (Surrey Police & Sussex Police, 2022).

⁶ Training for negotiators to act as negotiator co-ordinators, team leaders or supervisors (see Grubb, 2016; Grubb et al., 2022).

⁷ This course is delivered jointly by the Metropolitan Police Hostage and Crisis Negotiation Unit and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to enable negotiators to support international negotiation incidents (Surrey Police and Sussex Police, 2022).

main role in negotiator training delivery. Standards of training are also overseen by the National Negotiator Group (NNG) and the College of Policing (CoP).

Hostage and Crisis Negotiation Training Curricula: What Content is Covered Within Negotiator Training Programmes?

As alluded to above, the exact content of negotiation training will differ in accordance with the type/level of training being delivered and who is delivering the course. Having said this, there are suggested training curricula and common features that consistently appear throughout the literature and within extant training programmes. Baruch and Zarse (2012) discuss what they perceive to be the necessary components within a “state-of-the-art” hostage negotiation training programme, suggesting coverage of the following topics/components:

- 1) *The history of hostage negotiation* (i.e., understanding the origins and evolution of negotiation as an effective alternative to tactical intervention helps trainees to understand why we negotiate at critical incidents).
- 2) *Understanding critical incidents* (i.e., understanding the unique qualities of different hostage/crisis incidents with varying precipitants, motivations and situational characteristics enables negotiation strategies to be tailored accordingly).
- 3) *The big picture* (i.e., understanding that negotiation is only one component of the overall response to critical incidents and that negotiators need to work effectively with other tactical teams in order to promote successful resolution).
- 4) *Team composition* (i.e., understanding the team makeup and roles that each member takes within the negotiator cell along with enhancing team cohesion and rapport between members is an important component to successful team deployment).
- 5) *The negotiation process* (i.e., coverage of the phases/stages in negotiation from the initial deployment and engagement with the subject through to incident resolution; underpinning

techniques for successful negotiation progression such as establishing trust, building rapport and key communication techniques).

- 6) *Understanding the hostage taker* (i.e., understanding the psychology, culture, terrorist/gang affiliations of the subject and how this can be relevant to the negotiation and the type of communication styles adopted).
- 7) *Assessment of violence and suicide risk* (i.e., understanding that certain situations have higher levels of violence risk and that this can inform the strategic decision-making for commanders and the choice of communication strategies employed by negotiators).
- 8) *Stockholm Syndrome* (i.e., understanding the psychology behind the development of bonds between hostages and captors seen within the Stockholm Syndrome phenomenon and how to respond to such presentations).
- 9) *Hostage survival skills* (i.e., understanding the strategies that promote hostage survival, such as remaining calm, refraining from increasing the offender's stress levels, and demonstrating human qualities (Fagan, 2003, as cited in Baruch & Zarse, 2012)).
- 10) *Trauma* (i.e., reviewing the psychological effects of high-stress situations and feelings that might be encountered following a negative outcome to prepare negotiators for such an occurrence).
- 11) *Use of third-party intermediaries (TPIs)* (i.e., understanding the pros and cons of TPI implementation).
- 12) *Being proactive* (i.e., training should focus on the types of incidents likely to be encountered by the agency, reflect current literature, involve a minimum of 40 hours basic training with a role-play component; training should include joint training for negotiation and tactical teams to enhance cohesive incident response).

- 13) *Differences in law enforcement contexts* (i.e., understanding the differences between negotiations performed in police/federal law enforcement settings versus correctional settings).
- 14) *Afteraction analysis of critical incidents* (i.e., reviewing a variety of critical to learn from the success and failures of others; use of tapes, audio recordings and transcripts to analyse different incident types, perpetrators and negotiation strategies using a reflective thinking mindset).
- 15) *Role-playing* (i.e., scenario-based training should include role-playing in simulated realistic settings that mimic actual or possible critical incidents).
- 16) *Certification* (i.e., negotiators should receive a certification in crisis negotiation by completion of a certified course; negotiators should be assessed and pass the requisite tests/assessments to gain certification; negotiators should maintain proficiency via regular monthly trainings to promote team cohesion and operational readiness).

The current NCNA (2020) suggested crisis/negotiation curriculum equally provides detailed course goals/objectives for the 40-hour (basic) training course which are divided into 11 sections, as outlined below. Each section is elucidated by an exemplar(s) of the intended learning objectives associated with each topic.

- 1) *Introduction to crisis/hostage negotiation* (i.e., understand the premise of crisis negotiation).
- 2) *Effective communication* (i.e., recognise barriers to effective communication; apply basic communication skills to crisis negotiation).
- 3) *Pre-incident planning* (i.e., coordinate personnel, resources, and equipment for crisis negotiation).
- 4) *Command response* (i.e., evaluate and manage risk during a crisis incident).
- 5) *Phases of negotiation* (i.e., recognise phases of crisis negotiation).

- 6) *Intelligence and information management* (i.e., apply intelligence to resolving a crisis incident; maintain effective incident information charts and dialogue records).
- 7) *Negotiating as a team* (i.e., understand the team concept for successful crisis negotiation).
- 8) *Principles of negotiation* (i.e., recognise and apply factors that contribute to successful negotiation; recognise a non-negotiable situation).
- 9) *Law enforcement and the psychological crisis* (i.e., apply techniques for communicating with mentally ill or emotionally disturbed subjects).
- 10) *Suicide intervention for law enforcement perspective* (i.e., apply effective intervention techniques for the actively suicidal subject).
- 11) *Practical exercise* (i.e., serve as a member of a crisis negotiation team; use crisis negotiation equipment as a primary means of crisis negotiation).

Table 1 presents a synthesis of the main topic coverage and learning outcomes identified within existing negotiator training programmes⁸. It is clear from the information available that there is no internationally recognised standardised curriculum for negotiator training and that courses differ in terms of exact content covered. By far the largest insight into training content and design is provided by the US-based negotiation literature, with several books having been published focusing on crisis negotiation and training considerations/mechanisms (e.g., see Greenstone, 2005a; Hammer, 2007; Lanceley, 2003; McMains, Mullins, & Young, 2021; Rogan & Lanceley, 2010; Slatkin, 2009, 2010; Strentz, 2012, 2013, amongst others).

⁸ It is worth noting that not all training programme content is publicly available, so this synthesis is based on the information that is within the public domain. Less detailed information is available for some police department training programmes, i.e., the Hong Kong Police Force runs a 160-hour crisis negotiation course “designed to focus on both theories and practice of counter-terrorism, the handling of hostage situations and the defusing of suicide attempts” with additional training elements focusing on fitness, stamina and mental health (OffBeat, 2021). In Australia, officers complete an Advanced Diploma of Police Negotiation (POL60319) qualification, however, the training content is confidential and marked as a restricted police qualification (Australian Government, 2022). Please see Grubb (2016) and Grubb et al., (2022) for insights into the nature and context of historical negotiator training delivered in the UK.

Table 1

Table Synthesising the Topics Covered Within Various Hostage and Crisis Negotiation Training Programmes

Course name	Topic coverage & intended learning goals/objectives	Course provider (country of origin)	Course length
Hostage Crisis Negotiations - Level I (IPTM, n.d. b)	• Introduction to negotiation • Negotiation philosophy • Negotiation team responsibilities • Negotiation techniques • Behavioural profiles • Initial response and team set-up (Negotiation Operations Centre) • Personnel and equipment resources • Information gathering and maintenance • Stress management • Use of force issues • Practical training exercises: individual, pair and team	IPTM (US)	40 hours
Hostage Crisis Negotiations - Level II (IPTM, n.d. c)	• Subject suicidality: suicide-by-cop, murder/suicide, location suicidality • Negotiation strategies for mentally-ill, psychotic and paranoid personalities • Advanced negotiation techniques • Managing stress during the negotiation process • Managing intelligence (Advanced) • Special problems • Preparing for the protracted event	IPTM (US)	40 hours
Hostage Crisis Negotiations - Level III (IPTM, n.d. d)	• Recognising and utilising today's technology and communication tools • Team leader function: ○ Team development ○ Scene management	IPTM (US)	40 hours

	○ Team management and support ○ Interfacing with responding elements (command, tactical and other personnel) • Exploring PTSD and the negotiator response • Negotiating with an officer in crisis • Advocating for the team • Ongoing team training, documentation and scenario development • Positive and negative aspects of the media • Recruiting non-officer resources and their application on the scene, including: ○ Third-party intermediators ○ Dispatchers ○ Psychologists ○ Citizen academy ○ Actors • The impact, reciprocity, reciprocal agreements, and resources of the protracted incident		
Basic Crisis Negotiations (National Tactical Officers Association [NTOA], 2021)	• The legal and historical foundations of hostage/crisis negotiations and current practices in the field • Active listening techniques and their role in communicating empathy and building rapport • Crisis negotiations team roles, and the relationship of negotiators to SWAT and incident commanders • The dynamics of negotiation problems, including suspect demands, obstacles, deadlines, hostage survival, threats, one-way communications, measuring progress, and the phases of a negotiation incident from initial contact to the exit plan	NTOA (US)	40 hours (5 days)

	• Suicide intervention skills for suicide and suicide by cop incidents Intelligence exploitation including open source and social media • Common crisis situations and suspect profiles • Influence and compliance tactics • Managing indirect negotiations like the use of third-party intermediaries and interpreters • Healthy practices designed to keep negotiators safe legally, physically, and emotionally • Practical exercises and scenario-based learning to reinforce new skills		
Hostage Negotiation Phase I & II Training (International Association of Hostage Negotiators [IAHN] ⁹ , n.d. a)	• Crisis team structure • Dynamics of negotiations • Value of using trained police negotiators as opposed to using clergy, politicians, mental health professionals or family members • Psychology in hostage negotiations • The team concept – tactical and negotiation • Communicating with people in crisis (bosses and politicians included) • Negotiating with terrorists • Negotiator stress • Practical hands-on role-play	IAHN (US)	5 days
Hostage Negotiation Phase III Training (IAHN, n.d. b)	• Supervisory and management of a hostage negotiation team and hostage scene • Expert witnessing and prediction of resolution of hostage/barricade situations	IAHN (US)	4.5 days

⁹ The IAHN provides training and certified qualifications in the art of hostage negotiation. The IAHN, along with training provider, the Public Agency Training Council (PATC) manage the Dominick Misino Hostage Negotiator Certification which enables successful candidates to be certified as negotiators (IAHN, n.d. c). Certification is valid for two years, at which point negotiators need to recertify which can be achieved via various formats (IAHN, n.d. d).

	• Mentally disturbed/suicidal risk analysis • Communication and negotiations skills with the mentally impaired • Managing threatening situations • Stress and anxiety management and psychological threat assessment • Communication and negotiation skills applicable to jail and correction facilities • Dealing with victims of P.T.S.D.		
Crisis Negotiators Course (Canadian Police College, 2022)	• Ability to assess the behaviour and communication of suspects, hostages or barricaded subjects that help in determining appropriate strategies during crisis negotiation. • Knowledge of the philosophy and rationale of crisis negotiation as it applies to the role of the negotiator during the crisis situation. • Ability to use situational indicators to guide negotiations. • Knowledge of the methods used to resolve crisis incidents peacefully while ensuring the safety of all concerned. • Ability to use established communication skills, theories, and hostage negotiation techniques during simulated crisis situations.	Canadian Police College (Canada)	10 days

Hostage and Crisis Negotiation Training Methods: What Methods are Used and How are Negotiators Trained?

Negotiation courses include “negotiation strategies, models of behavioural change, coordination with tactical teams, and experiential learning” (Baruch & Zarse, 2012, p. 39); with this latter component forming a consistent underpinning mechanism. Historically, negotiator training has adopted a “behaviourally based, skills-orientated” approach, whereby trainers/instructors implement a variety of methods to achieve successful training outcomes. Such methods, as observed within the FBI’s NCNC, have tended to include a combination of “direct instruction, performance feedback, modelling, behavioural rehearsal, and positive reinforcement” to hone negotiation skills (Van Hasselt et al., 2006, p. 62). Other techniques identified include the role of “street smarts” and “streetwise-based” training and the incorporation of lectures delivered by experienced negotiators (Misano & McGowan, n.d.). These methods have continued to be relevant to current training protocols, with similar approaches being applied and key components such as active learning, combining academic understanding/theory with practice, role-playing, case-study based learning, reflective practice and the use of simulated scenarios/exercises/enactments being common features within negotiator training internationally (Grubb, 2016; Grubb et al., 2022; Baruch & Zarse, 2012; NCNA, 2020; NCNA & FBI, 2018). When reviewing the literature in this area, it becomes clear that it is not only the curriculum and learning content (i.e., the “*what*”) that is important, but the “*way*” the curriculum is taught equally plays a core role in the success of negotiator training programmes. There are several recurring themes within the literature that provide a roadmap for tried and tested negotiator training and can be highlighted as key concepts/areas of best practice for trainers to adopt. These concepts are discussed and elucidated further below, with specific recommendations for training implementation.

Best Practice Principles for Negotiator Training: Key Concepts within the Negotiator Training Arena

Use of Active, Experiential, Scenario-Based Learning/Role-Playing. Role-playing is commonly used as an instructional tool within law enforcement settings, with role-play constituting a foundational pillar within the training and assessment of negotiation skills (Van Hasselt & Romano, 2004; Van Hasselt et al., 2008; Vecchi et al., 2005). Role-play formats can vary both in length and characteristics, with some scenarios being taken from past real (hostage, barricaded, suicide, and kidnapping) incidents and other simulations being used to train negotiators on potential anticipated scenarios (see Van Hasselt & Romano, 2004; Van Hasselt et al., 2008; Vecchi et al., 2005 for exemplar scenarios). The NCNC developed by the FBI CNU, for example, contains a Role Play Test (RPT) with 12 audiotaped narrated scenarios that can be used to test trainee's negotiation skills. The scenarios are thematically organised, with four based around *family domestic* situations, four based on *workplace* situations and four based on *suicide* situations (Van Hasselt et al., 2008), thereby enabling trainees to apply and test their skills using a variety of ecologically valid simulated scenarios that they may themselves encounter within their negotiator role.

Role-play training scenarios often involve “confederates” playing the role of the subject, with pre-arranged scripted prompts used to create the dialogue for trainees to respond to and to facilitate an extended interaction (Van Hasselt et al., 2008; Vecchi et al., 2005). This role-play acting is usually performed by experienced veteran negotiators (sometimes from outside force/department) and is conceptualised by some negotiators as a way of “giving back” and getting involved with the training of new members of the team (i.e., knowledge exchange in a peer-to-peer format) (Grubb, 2016). The inclusion of negotiator “confederates” equally allows training formats to benefit from the experience and expertise of veteran negotiators, thereby enhancing realism of training protocols (Van Hasselt & Romano, 2004). One of the

key components and benefits to role-play-based training is the incorporation of frequent instructor feedback, whereby brief role-play scenarios allow for immediate feedback regarding performance (Van Hasselt & Romano, 2004). Such an approach enables trainees to reflect and make real time adjustments during the training, allowing them to correct and improve negotiation skills based on such feedback. Role-play methods provide a forum for negotiators to practice and develop core skills, such as active listening using behaviour rehearsal principles (Van Hasselt & Romano, 2004) and have been framed as offering perfect opportunities for development of communication skills, to practise strategies and increase chances of deployment success (Maher, 2004).

Role-play drills can be delivered in a variety of formats, including *voice-to-voice* role-plays whereby the trainee is required to negotiate with a subject (confederate/role-play actor) on the telephone; or in a *back-to-back* format where trainees are asked to sit with their backs to each other and to engage in dialogue as directed by instructors based on a specific scenario (with one playing the role of negotiator and the other playing the role of the subject). Similarly, role-plays can include *face-to-face* role-plays ranging in length from brief role-play scenarios in the earlier phases of training, through to lengthier extended scenarios lasting nearly an hour or up to several hours within the more advanced phases of training (reflecting scenarios that may require protracted negotiations) (Van Hasselt et al., 2008). The use of online methods to train negotiators have also been demonstrated in line with the rise in internet communication, use of distance learning in education settings, and the potential demand for negotiations to occur virtually, with crisis negotiation skills courses being delivered in a US context and using chat room role-plays requiring text-based negotiation as opposed to telephone or face-to-face communication (Vecchi, 2007 as cited in Van Hasselt et al., 2008).

Clinical Utility, Clinical Fertility, Ecological Validity, and Responsivity. The literature suggests that negotiator training should be informed by the concepts of clinical utility,

clinical fertility, and responsiveness. It has been recommended, for example, that role-play scenarios utilised within negotiator screening/selection programmes focus on scenarios that are “typical of the kinds of calls to which negotiators respond”; with a focus on the most frequently occurring incident categories based on national data (McMains, 2003). This concept has equally been identified as having relevance for training protocols, with recommendations for training content to be matched to the typical profile of incidents deployed to within a particular police department, or geographical region and for training to focus on incidents requiring most frequent deployment (Grubb, 2020). Training in an ecologically valid way using realistic simulation/role-play based on real deployments is a common recommended feature throughout negotiator trainings. The New York Police Department (NYPD) hostage negotiation training programme, for example, emphasises the use of role-playing based on “real” situations (McGowan & Thompson, 2014), further highlighting the importance of training “smart” and in a way that mimics the realities of real deployments. This concept is equally reflected within training programmes delivered in the UK, with training being designed to be realistic and to reflect the realities of negotiator deployment (Grubb et al., 2022).

The Role of Regular Refresher/Maintenance/Recurrent Training (“Practice Makes Perfect”). The communication skills utilising during negotiation and crisis intervention are recognised as being perishable skills (Davis, 2022), with negotiators being aware of the “if you don’t use them, you lose them” concept (Grubb, 2016). Regular continuous dynamic skills maintenance or ongoing training is therefore vital to ensure that negotiators maintain proficiency and operational preparedness/readiness (Grubb et al., 2022). Similar claims have been identified within the US literature, with Greenstone (1995, p. 292) stating that retraining in the form of review of basic modules completed within initial training, utilisation of additional simulated exercises within a team training environment and maintenance training is “essential for the maintenance of proficiency and readiness”

(Greenstone, 1995, p. 292). The current NCNA and FBI CNU (2018, p. 2) recommended negotiation guidelines still echo this sentiment, with section 4.D.1. stating that “negotiators should be required to maintain their skill levels through recurrent individual and team training”. From a US perspective, there is no national standard for ongoing maintenance training and the exact amount of recurrent training conducted varies across agencies i.e., agencies reported conducting between 0 and 17+ hours of maintenance training per month within Davis’s (2022) research, thereby highlighting the disparity and lack of consistent maintenance training levels across US law enforcement agencies. Despite a lack of standardised mandated policies regarding maintenance training, there are suggested “best practices” regarding training developed by Kidd (2005, updated 2013, as cited in McMains et al., 2021, p. 50), which state that “the majority of negotiators attend update training outside the department” and that “all negotiators attend in-house training four times a year”, with one training constituting a joint exercise with tactical and command. The NCNA and FBI (2018, p. 4) recommended negotiation guidelines also suggest that negotiators should “periodically receive updated training and practice in order to maintain proficiency” with a recommended minimum of 40 hours of training per annum.

In the UK, negotiators are required to maintain and submit an accreditation booklet for review and renewal by their force co-ordinator (team leader) on an annual basis, in line with the Hostage and Crisis Negotiator Policing Professional Profile to ensure that negotiators “maintain and enhance competence in the role” (College of Policing, 2022). Individual force policies equally highlight the requirement for forces to “provide regular training for their negotiators”, and for negotiators to maintain a “professional development portfolio” which records any deployments, training and CPD completed, and demonstrates that the standards of CPD set by the National Negotiator Group (NNG) are being met (Surrey Police & Sussex

Police, 2022, p. 2); however, the minimum number of hours of regular maintenance training required is not outlined within such documentation.

The Importance of Engagement with Regular Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Opportunities. Regular participation in CPD activities has been highlighted as an important component to ensure that negotiators maintain operational readiness and the ability to respond to the ever-evolving terrain of negotiator deployment (Grubb et al., 2019b). CPD can take a variety of formats ranging from formal training completed as a cadre through to self-directed informal mechanisms of learning; with the main focus being on providing opportunities to develop skills, identify best practice and learn lessons from previous deployments that may not have run as smoothly as they would have liked (Grubb, 2016; Grubb et al., 2022). Regular attendance at regional or national conferences has also been suggested as a beneficial forum for negotiators to review incidents faced by other agencies and to learn how any problems encountered were resolved. Such learning opportunities have also been purported to be beneficial in terms of allowing real field recordings of negotiation dialogue to be shared amongst colleagues, a form of exposure which is considered to have an “inoculation effect” enabling negotiators to become desensitised to the high emotional states that may be displayed by subjects in hostage or barricade incidents, which may help them to maintain composure and self-control when experiencing similarly emotionally aroused subjects in their own future deployments (Regini, 2002, p. 5). In line with this, the recommended negotiation guidelines (NCNA & FBI CNU, 2018, p. 5) state that “attending regional or national conferences, learning from case study presentations, and conducting joint training with tactical teams and other nearby negotiation teams is highly desirable”.

Stress Management and Resilience Building for Negotiators. Stress management has been highlighted as an important skill for negotiators to master, particularly when

considering the complex, challenging, risky and high-pressure environments that they work in. Negotiators are not immune to the emotional burdens or psychological sequelae of stress, and instead need to be able to develop effective coping mechanisms to adaptively deal with the stress that they encounter within their role and prevent negative impact on psychological functioning and wellbeing. If negotiators are suffering from the negative effects of stress, they are unlikely to be able to perform effectively, thereby placing successful negotiated resolution outcomes at risk. Aligned to this, negotiators who have not learned to effectively manage stress encountered as part of their negotiator role may also end up placing their own psychological wellbeing at risk, which can have far reaching impacts on the officer themselves, and their family unit/members (Slatkin, 2010). Negotiators must remember that in the same way that therapists must be psychologically stable to help others, negotiators must equally look after their own mental health and manage stress levels to ensure that they can support and help others in the most effective way (i.e., to help others, we must first help ourselves). As wisely outlined by Greenstone (2005b, p. 45), “stress and emotional trauma, left unattended, will incapacitate a negotiator just as surely as if the negotiator had been shot or otherwise injured”.

Various methods to build psychological armour (Greenstone, 2005b) to reduce and manage stress within the profession have been suggested, with the concept of negotiator survival skills being discussed by Greenstone (2005a) and including the recommended use of self-relaxation skills, recognising the effects of stress and job burnout, and developing personal survival skills. Sources of negotiator stress are varied, and stress will affect negotiators in different ways. Bohl (1992) highlighted some of the stressors encountered by negotiators both during and after negotiations. This included the external pressures from others to resolve the incident quickly or resort to tactical intervention. This organisational stressor has equally been highlighted as a source of stress by Norton and Petz (2012) and within Grubb’s (2016) research in the form of competing tactical orientations and operational conflict whereby the negotiator’s

wishes to “play it long” often come into conflict/are incongruent with tactical commander’s wishes to “quickly resolve the situation”. Internal pressure to perform well or that the negotiations may not be successful are equally highlighted as sources of stress (Bohl, 1992). Other stressors identified include the crisis situation itself (often chaotic and emotionally charged), interactions with tactical team members, contact with hostage takers, and the physiological impact of protracted negotiations (in the form of physical and emotional fatigue) (Norton & Petz, 2012).

Encountering stressful situations is an inevitable part of negotiator deployment, however, negotiators can be trained to manage stress and to reduce the potential negative impacts of such stress. Bohl (1992) highlights the following stress management techniques that negotiators can be trained to utilise:

1. The use of breathing exercises.
2. Muscle relaxation techniques.
3. Techniques to reduce physiological responses to stress (e.g., sweating, tremors, and stomach cramps).
4. Cognitive techniques and cognition management.

Similarly, Norton & Petz (2012) discuss a range of pre-, during, and post-incident stress management practices that can be adopted by negotiators. Pre-incident methods include the use of high stress, high reality training (i.e., reality-based scenario training) to mimic the pressures and realities of negotiation deployments and provide a form of “stress inoculation” (Grossman & Christensen, 2004); whereby “prior success under stressful conditions acclimatises you to similar situations and promotes future success” (p. 35). Effective training also helps to build negotiator confidence, familiarisation with procedures and equipment, and team cohesion; aspects which all help to buffer against stress encountered during deployment

(Norton & Petz, 2012). During incident methods include reliance on the team set-up for support with a difficult and often challenging task, with particular emphasis placed on the primary and secondary (support) negotiator setup as an effective stress management tool (Grubb et al., 2022; Norton & Petz, 2012). Being able to step away from the “negotiating table” even just temporarily and attending to basic human needs such as getting nourishment, walking around, stretching, and getting fresh air are also effective stress management tools (McMains et al., 2021). Post-incident methods include the use of debriefing in various guises (operational debriefing, critical decision debriefing, emotional debriefing) (see McMains et al., 2021 for a lengthy discussion of these techniques); with these debriefings serving dual purposes (in the form of a therapeutic and wellbeing mechanism and a form of reflective practice to guide future deployments) (Grubb et al., 2021). Individual, self-directed adaptive coping mechanisms for stress are also important for negotiators to develop and adopt (in line with what works for them personally), with use of peer/family social support, and the use of exercise/sport being two exemplars (Greenstone, 2005b; Grubb et al., 2022; Norton & Petz, 2012).

Finally, there is a growing body of literature relating to the role of resilience practices within law enforcement settings; with an emphasis on the potential benefits of awe and other resilience practices for officers generally and, more specifically, for negotiators (see Thompson et al., 2022). Adopting a proactive as opposed to a reactive approach by training negotiators to be aware of and to manage their own psychological wellbeing, mental health and enhance their resilience is akin to buying an insurance policy – you hope that you don’t have to use it, but it is there if you do! Such stress management and resilience skills are equally as important as the communication skills we train negotiators to use *in theatre* and should receive proportionate attention within training programmes.

Salient Constructs/Foci Within Contemporary Negotiation Training and Practice

Advances in Technology and Use of Communications Media Within Negotiations

In line with the changing communication styles and technology available within society, particularly the increase in SMS (text messaging) and virtual (online) communication, it appears prudent to suggest that current negotiator training should incorporate a range of diverse communication styles, methods, and media, with this being reflected within role-play exercises. Negotiators in the UK, for example, have highlighted the importance of selecting the most appropriate method of communication to match the subject and situation (ranging from landline telephones, throw phones, bullhorns, SMS, email, and chat functions within social networking sites) (Grubb et al., 2021); however, it is not clear to what extent negotiators are trained to specifically employ these various methods of communication. St-Yves et al., (2022) have equally highlighted the importance of moving with the times for negotiators to be equipped with the necessary skills to engage with younger subjects (or other subjects) who may prefer to converse using text message or social media forums. They appositely discuss the requirement for negotiators to be able to use the “text me” concept in addition to the historical “talk to me” mantra adopted by the NYPD Hostage Negotiation Team (St Yves et al., 2022, p. 197), suggesting that text-based negotiation skills should be an area of foci within current and future training programmes. Negotiators need to be trained in a way that enables them to be able to respond appropriately and effectively, regardless of the manner in which the subject chooses to communicate. Practising these skills in a safe and controlled training environment will enhance operational readiness should they encounter a non-verbal negotiating scenario in the future.

The Role and Significance of Mental Health in Negotiation

Although mental health crisis has historically and consistently played a longstanding predominant role in many of the deployments to which negotiators respond (Grubb, 2010, 2020), there is a suggestion that mental health crises are on the increase and that this trend has been exacerbated due to the coronavirus global pandemic and associated restrictions (Mind,

2021)¹⁰. Research conducted by Mind mental health charity based in the UK found that more than 60% of adults and more than two thirds of young people (68%) reported that their mental health had deteriorated during lockdown, those with existing mental health problems were more likely to experience worsening of symptoms, and even individuals who had not suffered with mental health problems previously were more likely to experience a decline in their mental health and wellbeing (Mind, 2020). When considering that a large proportion (by far the majority) of incidents to which negotiators deploy has historically constituted individuals who are experiencing psychological, emotional or personal crisis and are threatening to harm themselves as opposed to others (see Grubb, 2020), it is logical to assume that the demand for suicide intervention by negotiators is likely to increase in line with the increased trend of mental health issues being observed within society. Such statistics highlight the ever-important role of crisis and suicide intervention techniques within training programmes, utilising a research-informed and evidence-based foundation for the skills being instructed; a concept that resonates appositely with Regini's (2002, p. 3), suggestion that "training programmes should address the most common types of incident that the CNT is likely to encounter and reflect the most current proven professional knowledge in the field".

Training Top Tips and Key Takeaways

The key messages threaded throughout the current chapter have been synthesised into the following set of training top tips that can be applied by negotiators and instructors within their practices:

- 1) Train **hard** (get the basics right and build a strong foundation).

¹⁰ The coronavirus global pandemic has even given rise to new negotiator roles that were not previously observed. In Hong Kong, for example, negotiators were deployed to persuade individuals who were refusing to go into quarantine to follow government restrictions (Hong Kong Police Review, 2020). Such a deployment would have been unprecedented prior to the pandemic, further demonstrating the ever-evolving discipline and applications of negotiation.

- 2) Train **regularly** (“practice makes perfect”; “if you don’t use it, you lose it”).
- 3) Train **smart** (focus proportionately on the incidents that are likely to be frequently encountered).
- 4) Train **realistically** (use real incidents to inform training content).
- 5) Train **actively** (use scenario-based exercises and role-play drills).
- 6) Train **together** (both within and across negotiator and tactical teams).
- 7) Train **forever** (use CPD and recurrent training to ensure best practice and currency).
- 8) Train **informed** (use evidence-based and research-informed training protocols).
- 9) Train **diversely** (use a variety of incident categories and methods of communication to enhance flexibility and operational readiness).
- 10) Train **self** (to manage psychological stress and increase resilience).

Key Takeaways for Police Officers (Front Line)

Negotiation is a perishable skill that needs to be practised regularly to maintain competency. Negotiators should complete regular training/CPD, and ensure that their knowledge is research-informed, evidence-based, and current to maintain operational readiness. Negotiators should be proactive in developing adaptive stress management techniques and engage in resilience practices to protect psychological wellbeing and buffer against the effects of stress encountered during deployments.

Key Takeaways for Conflict Management Trainers

Negotiation training should be designed in line with recommended guidelines and existing research/evidence bases. Trainers/instructors should adopt realistic scenario-based training (using real historical cases) that mimics the stress and realities of true deployments. Content of training should be designed using existing tried and tested curricula and training methods.

Key Takeaways for Police Decision-Makers

Negotiation is a vital and effective police tool that prevents numerous injuries/fatalities and should therefore be consistently invested in when it comes to initial and maintenance training programmes to ensure that agencies have enough adequately trained (and operationally ready) negotiators who can deploy to critical incidents.

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