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Assessment of Hostage Situations and Their Perpetrators: In the Context of Domestic Violence

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The assessment and consequent management of a hostage situation can be varied in response to the motivation and presenting traits of the hostage taker. While a model of crisis negotiation can be utilized, it nonetheless requires modification in the context of the presenting situation. Models of crisis negotiation present with a structure to manage a chaotic situation, with the appreciation of the need to modify any approach dependent upon the presenting crisis. This chapter will present a crisis model that has been regularly utilized through a variety of hostage situations. The chapter will also propose modifications in response to the presenting situation, both in regard to the perpetrators motivations, traits, and characteristics, which are important considerations as part of the negotiation process. Crisis incidents focusing on domestic violence will be a main consideration. Before describing the crisis model and adaptations to it, it is important to clarify what is meant by “hostage” situations.

Hostage taking would be considered as the “holding of one or more persons against their will with the actual or implied use of force” (Lanceley, 1999). McMains and Mullins (2001) further report a hostage situation is any incident in which people are being held by another person or persons against their will, usually by force or coercion, and demands are being made by the hostage taker. It can be regarded as a crisis incident where the perpetrator’s ability to manage the presenting problem has diminished. Crisis situations, such as hostage-taking, have been regarded as “a

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temporary state of upset and disorganization, characterized chiefly by an individual's inability to cope with a particular situation using customary methods of problem solving" (Slaiku, 1990). Hostage taking is certainly not a new concept. The term "hostage" comes from the Latin *hospes* meaning "hospitality". Clearly this definition is no longer an accurate representation of the term. Faure (2004) argues that, historically, the practice of hostage taking dates back many centuries to ancient Egypt, Persia, the Middle East, Greece, and the Roman Empire. In some circumstances it was to even be found as a clause in political contracts, such as treaties. The first "hostages" were more often individuals regarded as prominent, even members of royalty, and who were given to adversaries in order to guarantee the fulfillment of commitments. Commitments may be varied, but included exchanging prisoners or leaving land and territory (Faure, 2004). Indeed, the practice of hostage-taking did not become illegal until the eighteenth century. In today's society, hostage-taking can include a variety of situations, such as skyjacking, barricade with a hostage (such as in a domestic dispute), attacks on public buildings, such as embassies, and kidnapping (Hayes 2002). Further, and as argued by Faure (2004), according to the definition adopted by the European Union in 2001, hostage-taking falls into the category of terrorist offenses and includes activities such as extortion, seizure of aircraft, kidnapping for the purpose of seriously intimidating a population, and any efforts to alter or destroy the political, economic, or social structure of a country.

MODEL OF CRISIS NEGOTIATION

The management of a hostage situation is through the use of crisis negotiation. This is an approach first introduced in the 1970s, by the New York Police Department following substantial crisis incidents which ended in tragedy, such as the Munich Olympics where a number of Israeli athletes were taken hostage and later killed, as well as the Attica prison riots where a number of prisoners and hostages were killed by the authorities (Vecchi, Van Hasselt, & Romano, 2005). Crisis negotiation is considered to be an approach that focuses on the safe release of the hostages, the non-violent arrest of the perpetrator, and where efforts are made to calm a situation and to increase rational thought.

Crisis negotiation focuses on establishing communication between the perpetrator, buying time in order to defuse emotions and enable planning. Such planning can involve the gathering of intelligence to determine the best negotiation or intervention strategies and/or tactics (Lanceley, 1999; Romano & McCann, 1997). The playing for time can allow the perpetrator time to consider their actions more rationally, as opposed to simply responding impulsively and more reactively to the presenting situation (Whyte, 2005). Ultimately the aim of crisis negotiation is to demonstrate that the method chosen by the perpetrator, namely the taking of a hostage, is not an effective strategy for dealing with their problem. Hatcher, Mohandie, Turner, and Gelles

(1998) argue that “the goal or mission of crisis/hostage negotiation is to utilize verbal strategies to buy time and intervene so that the emotions of the perpetrator can decrease and rationality can increase” (p. 455).

The use of crisis negotiation strategies is not restricted to a hostage situation. A hostage situation can be considered to have parallels with a variety of other crisis situations, such as roof top protests and barricades, and where the use of the crisis negotiation model can enhance the management of the situation. The model has been used in a variety of crisis situations and has been reported to have between an 80 to 95% success rate (McMains & Mullins, 2001) in contrast to a high rate of injuries when a more forceful approach is utilized. Taking by force is not to be preferred over negotiation, with armed assaults resulting in a 78% injury or death rate (Dolnik, 2004). A total of 75% of all casualties in a hostage incident arise from the rescue attempt (Poland & McCrystle, 1999).

One of the most utilized models of crisis negotiation is arguably the Behavioral Influence Stairway Model (BISM) developed by the FBI (Vecchi et al., 2005, revised Van Hasselt, Romano, & Vecchi, 2008). This model is presented in Figure 15.1 below.

This model focuses on developing an effective relationship between the person in crisis and the negotiator, leading to behavioral change in the person in crisis, leading to a peaceful resolution (Dalfonzo, 2002). This approach has been consistently effective in the resolution of a wide range of volatile crisis situations (Flood, 2003), including community crisis situations such as domestic violence. This model is a development from earlier approaches, which focused on a more problem-solving aim to the crisis situation, and identifying motivations, looking to separate the individual from the problem, focusing on their interests as opposed to their positions, generating options, with a view to creating behavioral change (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991).

The substantial emphasis on the relationship-building process of crisis negotiation highlights the importance of having a supportive and trusting relationship between the perpetrator and negotiator in order to maximise the chances of a peaceful resolution.

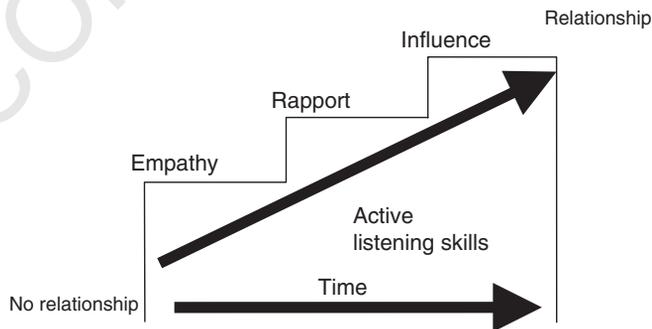


Figure 15.1 Behavioral influence stairway model (Van Hasselt, 2008). Reproduced with permission of Sage Publications

While the motivation of the perpetrator is undoubtedly important, the model emphasizes the need to develop an appropriate relationship as a key factor in managing the situation, and not with an over-focus on the perpetrators motivations alone. This further demonstrates a clear shift in the literature with regard to key factors in peaceful resolutions. Arguably, an over focus on problem-solving can potentially lead a negotiator to focus too heavily on seeking the motivation behind the crisis, which may potentially lead to a tendency to rush the perpetrator to a resolution.

The BISM (Van Hasselt et al., 2008) focuses on four key elements that are considered important in the developing of an effective relationship between the negotiator and perpetrator; active listening, empathy, rapport and influence. While presented as steps, an effective consideration of this approach is to view each of the four key elements as building on one another. For example, once active listening is felt to have been achieved, the next step would be empathy. Yet, this would not mean that active listening is no longer incorporated, but rather, it is continually built upon by the negotiator. This model is designed to be flexible and dynamic, and where an individual may quickly move up the steps, or even skip some steps altogether. It is regarded as very much a starting point in the negotiation process, and in order to provide a structure to a usually chaotic situation.

Active listening is considered the crucial first step in this model, with the view that little can be achieved without this as a fundamental basis. Vecchi et al. (2005) argue that active listening is an attempt to lower the perpetrator's emotions, and to return them to more rational thinking. Empathy follows as an appreciation of the situation and the person's circumstances as part of this. Rapport is then developed, where trust between the negotiator and perpetrator enhances as a result of such understanding and demonstration of empathy. Finally, influence occurs as the perpetrator is persuaded to change their behavior from the maladaptive to the more adaptive (Van Hasselt et al., 2008).

PERPETRATOR MOTIVATIONS

The motivations and interests of a perpetrator can be varied (Dolnik, 2004) and are of key consideration when a crisis negotiator attempts to develop a relationship with the person in crisis. Dolnik (2004) argues that a perpetrator may try to provoke a confrontation as part of the crisis situation, and in order to give permission to commit suicide, financial gain, or even avoid a prison term. There may be political, religious or financial motivations. The perpetrator may be responding to propaganda or a feeling of a need to seek revenge. Importantly, the perpetrators interests may not be that obvious, and may be more hidden, such as a desire to be admired by others, to fulfil another need, or to demonstrate their commitment to a particular cause (Dolnik, 2004). Whyte (2005) argues that such differing motivations can include prisoners taking staff hostage in order to wish to bargain for better living

conditions or terrorists viewing hostage taking as a means by which they can gain international media attention for a political motivation.

Whyte (2005) further argues that motivations may again be different for an estranged husband barricaded in a house with his estranged partner, and who may be less clear as to his demands in the “heat of the moment”. For example, a perpetrator may inform the authorities that they have taken their child hostage as their estranged partner who cares for their child will not allow them enough access to the child and they wish for more contact. Arranging for more contact may actually exacerbate the situation as this may not be the true reason for the perpetrators distress. Indeed, the lack of contact with the child may actually relate to a feeling that the perpetrator has little control over their life often feeling that decisions are made without collaboration and discussion. They may feel that the limited contact with their child is further example of their estranged partner making decisions to suit their own needs without consideration of the other. To not explore this in detail, and to indeed focus on increasing contact, may potentially lead the perpetrator to further feel that they are not being listened too, and the presenting issue is considered only at a superficial level, therefore prolonging the prospect of a resolution.

Similarly, a perpetrator who has taken their child hostage following the breakdown of their relationship with their partner, may make a number of demands, such as wishing to see their partner, or desiring to see their doctor. It is important to consider that these demands may not actually be the true motive and the situation may be more about an expression of their distress or even a need to seek revenge on their partner in the hope that the crisis situation will evoke the same level of distress they felt when their relationship with their partner came to an end. As such, to consider meeting such requested demands might potentially lead a perpetrator to feel that their true needs, such as an opportunity to express their distress or seek revenge, are not considered by the authorities, which may exacerbate the situation further.

Nosener and Webster (1997), expanding on the earlier work of Miron and Goldstein (1979), have categorized such demands and consequent motivations of hostage-taking into two types of behavior; instrumental behavior and expressive behavior. Instrumental behavior consists of demands and objectives that focus on meeting the goals of the hostage-taker, that are rational and focused on achieving an aim, or changing some aspect of society. Some terrorist hostage-taking fits the more instrumental behavior, or an offender who decides to take hostages as part of leverage during a robbery. Expressive behavior refers more to the hostage-taker expressing their internal emotions and impulses in the given situation, and which are often personal to the hostage taker. Here the focus appears less rational and is directed more toward an expression of emotion than an attempt to seek specific demands. Indeed, the demands may not be the point. It has further been argued that the instrumental and expressive behavior should be regarded more as along a continuum, as opposed to an individual clearly fitting in to either at any one time. Hostage takers may have a mixture of both instrumental and expressive motivations. For example,

an individual who makes the decision to take their ex-partner hostage may have planned the event some time in advance, with a clear focus and goal of distressing the ex-partner. Yet, this may further be a result of the emotional distress they feel following the relationship breakdown, and a lack of rational thinking. As such, and while appearing to have clear goals and planning, the actual focus of the crisis itself may be more toward the perpetrator demonstrating to the ex-partner their distress at the relationship deteriorating, and their uncertainty as to how they can continue their day-to-day life without their partner. As such, this would present with both instrumental and expressive behaviors, and is something that crisis negotiators need to be mindful of.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence can be defined as:

Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 or over; who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality. Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, in-laws or step-family. (ACPO, 2008, p. 7)

Reports indicate that, in the United Kingdom, domestic violence can account for around 15% of all violent crime, involving one in four women and one in six men at some point in their lives. A total of 35% of all murders are driven by domestic violence. It is documented that domestic violence has the highest rate of repeat victimization (Home Office, 2006). Domestic violence does not focus on any particular culture or gender, with it occurring across society, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, wealth and geography (Home Office, 2006).

Previous research in the United States has indicated that almost 80% of all hostage situations are relationship driven, such as perceived relationship difficulties and resentments, including abandonment and rejection (Flood, 2003). Domestic violence has reportedly been identified as presenting with a range of risks. In the United States, and when looking at rates of domestic violence toward women, it is noted that a woman is more likely to be assaulted, injured, raped, or killed by a male partner than by any other types of assailant (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1995). Van Hasselt et al. (2005) argue that the crisis incident involving domestic violence presents with a range of complex and varied issues, much in the same way as any crisis incident. Van Hasselt et al. (2005) further argue that a range of risk factors can be present, such as substance abuse, possession of a weapon, prior history of domestic violence, threats or actual separation or divorce and other criminal activity, much as would be related to general risk factors in violent domestic

incidents. Van Hasselt et al. (2005) argue that there was a proportion of crisis incidents where the hostage-taker was under the influence of substances. In their study, they present five cases of hostage-taking as part of domestic violence, arguing that in three out of the five cases presented, substance use was a factor, with the use of a deadly weapon being a further factor in all five cases, leading to the death of the victim (hostage) in two out of the five cases, and before the police and negotiators had arrived at the scene. Yet, such presentations are not unique to crisis incidents driven by domestic violence, with Michaud, St-Yves, and Guay (2008) reporting that substance misuse is found in two-thirds of perpetrators in crisis incidents, which exacerbates the impaired judgment, irritability, and increased risk of violence (Parker & Auerhahn, 1998).

CONSIDERATIONS IN RESPONSE TO PERPETRATORS' BEHAVIOR, CHARACTERISTICS, AND TRAITS

As earlier presented, the behavior change stairway model of crisis negotiation is an important consideration to the management of a crisis situation, offering structure to a highly stressful and potentially chaotic situation. Yet, the model on its own offers only guidance to the management, and there needs to be further consideration and modification in response to the presenting traits, behaviors and characteristics of a perpetrator, and which may interfere with the relationship-building aim of the model. Exploration of all possible behaviors, characteristics and traits would not be achievable within the context of this chapter, yet examples of perpetrator's behavior, characteristics, and traits are presented and discussed below. It is further of note that perpetrators may potentially fall in to more than one of the presented categories, or demonstrate elements from a combination of categories. The categories here are presented for ease of presentation.

Hostile and Aggressive Perpetrator

This individual may be described as potentially deceitful and persistently lying. They may be unclear with the negotiator regarding information around the crisis or other issues, or alternatively, their reasons behind certain decisions may change without a clear reason or understanding. They may present as impulsive and irritable; making quick decisions regarding how to manage the crisis, and expressing frustration when the situation appears not to be moving in their chosen direction. For example, if the perpetrator has taken their ex-partner hostage and is demanding to see their child, they may become extremely agitated and irritable if this demand is not met. They may further present as aggressive, with a reckless disregard for themselves and others, caring little for the distress caused to the hostage and their families. As such, they may further find it difficult to consider the negative aspects of the crisis situation, demonstrating little remorse for their actions.

The negotiator would have to consider some crucial issues with such an individual and as part of the crisis situation. It would be helpful for the negotiator to ensure that the attention is kept on the perpetrator and as a way of managing any impulsivity. This further ensures that the perpetrator is kept occupied reducing the potential for them to over-focus on the hostage(s). Over-focusing on any hostages by the negotiator would be unhelpful here, especially as the perpetrator can present with a high level of aggression and a lacking in remorse, which may heighten any risk of harming the hostage. Such individuals may find it challenging to engage successfully with negotiators perceived to be in an authoritarian role, and indeed might find it difficult to relate and work with such individuals. This is an important consideration for the negotiating team, and any individuals who are felt to present with a perceived level of authority to the perpetrator are best not to become directly involved in the negotiations. Further, discussions around what is morally right and wrong may not be the most effective here as they may present with little respect for this. For example, when considering the perpetrator who presents in this way and who has held their ex-partner hostage, any discussions around such a decision being ineffective or unhelpful is likely to be disregarded. Negotiators would need to consider the varying levels of irritability and aggression carefully, particularly when any demands are not met, such as the perpetrator asking to see his child and this not taking place. As such, any decision to discuss demands need to take place carefully and with due consideration as to the potential consequences.

Importantly the negotiator needs to be mindful that they may not be able to trust the information provided by the perpetrator. This may be considered accurate in any crisis situation but particularly so with the perpetrator who presents with these traits. Also, a consideration in crisis situations that involve a hostage is the effort to develop a positive relationship between the two, and where the perpetrator is less likely to harm the hostage. Traditionally this has been referred to as Stockholm Syndrome, and where the hostage begins to relate positively to the perpetrator, developing negative feelings toward the authorities, and which are further reciprocated by the perpetrator (Fuselier, 1988). Although this syndrome is considerably rare, it is even less likely with the hostile and aggressive perpetrator as described here. As such, discussions with the perpetrator on the benefits to them for ending the situation, namely “what’s in it for me?” may be the most helpful. Similarly they may show little regard for the safety of the hostages, leading to the negotiator to attempt full focus on themselves as part of the crisis resolution.

Part of the crisis negotiations, and as presented earlier in this chapter, is the development of a positive relationship between the perpetrator and crisis negotiator, and as part of the BISM (Van Hasselt et al., 2008). As such, appropriate personal disclosures can be a crucial factor in developing this relationship. Yet, careful consideration with this perpetrator needs to take place, where personal information that is sensitive should be avoided. It would be true to state that personal information that is sensitive to the negotiator is generally best avoided as part of the negotiation

process, but this is particularly important here. For example, the perpetrator may use such information to attempt to distress or to blame the negotiator in some way. An example may be a negotiator, as part of developing the relationship, disclosing to the perpetrator that they have in the past become angry when dealing with a stressful situation. The perpetrator, later in the negotiations, and in an effort to control the situation and to disregard the negotiator, may use such information to comment to the negotiator that the current situation is stressful and it appears to them that the negotiator is actually becoming angry and finding it difficult to cope. Of additional consideration when the negotiator attempts to develop an effective relationship is that the perpetrator may simply give the impression that a relationship is developing, when this may indeed not be the case. As part of the perpetrators presentation, the development of rapport, a key aspect in relationship development, may not be a viable option.

Paranoid Perpetrator

This individual can present with a range of anxieties, such as feeling that others are exploiting or deceiving them. For example, they may have taken their partner hostage as they feel they have been unfaithful to them, exploiting them in front of their friends, taking advantage of them in a variety of ways, which has no basis of truth. They may struggle to trust others, which may be particularly challenging as part of the crisis situation. For example, they may feel that their ex-partner has continually lied to them without true basis. They may fear that information may be used against them such as to “trick” them in to agreeing something that they do not wish for. They may read threats into messages or situations, where most would not. For example, his partner may have, prior to the crisis incident, have had a friend visit the home. Without due cause, the perpetrator may regard this visit as one where his partner and their friend were discussing him in negative terms, interpreting this simply due to the friend looking at him when he entered the room. In particular, this individual may present as bearing substantial grudges toward others for a long duration, of at least 12 months or more. Such grudges may be unfounded but present with a high level of emotion nonetheless. For example, the perpetrator may report to have not spoken to his partner’s mother for over 12 months as a result of a perceived slight against him. He may report that the mother chose not to say her farewells to him when leaving a family party and where he interpreted this as a threat toward him. As a result, he may develop strong feelings of dislike toward the mother, which have continued and been persistent. As such, this individual may perceive attacks to his character or reputation, without founding, with a further level of heightened suspicion.

Following such a presentation the negotiator needs to consider a variety of issues. In particular, they may regard the negotiator with suspicion. As such, sincerity and active listening are important considerations. A key aspect of crisis negotiation, and

indeed on developing the relationship, is for the negotiator to present with honesty. As such, and particularly relevant for this individual, it is very important not to lie. There is a substantial risk that the negotiator may be “caught out” which will seriously compromise their relationship with the perpetrator. In some instances this may even lead to a decision to change negotiators. Honesty is important here and is something that the perpetrator may look for to a substantial degree. More senior authorities managing the crisis situation can assist here by ensuring the negotiator is made aware only of critical information that is needed as part of the negotiations and not that which may potentially compromise the situation. For example, the authorities may choose not to inform the negotiator that a tactical assault is being planned, so as not to place them in a difficult position with the perpetrator, and where they are being asked to lie. Further, and a key strategy in negotiation, is the playing of time in order to increase rational thinking and maximize the chance of a peaceful resolution. As part of this the negotiator is not in a position to make executive decisions, such as whether the perpetrator can have some food or not. The negotiator is requested to pass these requests on. Yet, for a perpetrator who is paranoid it is useful to consider how to respond to their queries as to who the information is being passed on to. A solution for the negotiator is simply to say “I suspect it is probably my boss, but I’m not sure as I’m here talking to you, so I can only guess...”.

As the negotiator attempts to gather information about the presenting situation the perpetrator may be suspicious as to why the negotiator appears interested to seek information about them. For example, the negotiator may be attempting to gather information about how they respond when they feel angry, and indeed, what kind of issues raise their emotions in this way. The perpetrator who is paranoid may respond with suspicion and be fearful of confiding in the negotiator, demanding why the negotiator is seeking such information, and alleging to the negotiator that they only wish to seek such information so that others may know what makes them angry and who may then make efforts to anger them as a result. As such, gaining trust and consequent rapport in the model may present with a number of challenges.

It is important for the negotiator to remain calm in the situation. For example, the perpetrator with paranoid behaviors and characteristics may react angrily toward the negotiator if they feel they are getting too close to them. For example, the perpetrator may have started to discuss issues with the negotiator and it appears that indeed some form of a relationship is beginning to develop. Yet, the perpetrator may then recognize this, become suspicious of the negotiators motives, and look to remove this developing relationship using anger as a perceived method of ending this relationship quickly. As such, it is important for the negotiator to persevere, to remain calm, and to continue to present honestly to the perpetrator. Alternatively, the perpetrator may consider hidden meaning in the negotiator’s discussions that may make little sense to those around them. For example, the perpetrator may report that when the negotiator turns to look at the floor when talking to them this is indeed a message to them that the negotiator does not value them and might

simply be trying to “con” them in some way. While invariably this cannot be avoided altogether, all discussions and non-verbal interactions need to be considered carefully. For example, it is useful for the negotiator to ensure that they are clear in their discussions with no ambiguity. As there can be a risk that the perpetrator may well perceive attacks on their character in some way, such as them feeling they are managing the crisis situation ineffectively, and which is simply further evidence of their inadequacies, then the “saving of face” could be an important consideration. Here the negotiator will aim to highlight to positive characteristics of the individual, and attempt to place a “positive spin” to the situation, without suggesting the decision to take an individual hostage was an effective strategy. For example, the negotiator may indicate that “you strike me as the kind of person that likes to do the right thing, and I think you are showing that now by taking the time to talk to me, and I thank you for that”.

Depressed Perpetrator

This individual can present with a range of behaviors and characteristics that require considerations as part of a crisis situation. Clearly, they may present as low in mood. They may have little interest in what is going on around them other than the immediate situation itself. Yet, and as part of the low mood, there may be a number of challenges when attempting to engage the individual in conversation. They may present with little motivation to continue a conversation with others and appear tired and fatigued. As such, they may find it difficult to concentrate on aspects of the crisis situation, presenting with a high level of distractibility. They may present with feelings of worthlessness, even displaying feelings of guilt. For example, during a crisis situation where an individual takes their partner hostage as part of an altercation, as time progresses, they may feel that they are not dealing with the situation well, and may feel a level of guilt for distressing loved ones, leading to an exacerbation of low self-worth. This may further exacerbate any thoughts of self-harm or suicide, and may be potential serious considerations in the depressed perpetrator. They may further present with a number of challenges when decisions are required, such as struggling to make any specific choices about their presenting options.

As such, the negotiator must consider a variety of presenting issues with such an individual. For example, any decision to perhaps withhold food and water from the individual, and in an effort to perhaps increase a basic need for food and increase the chances of them ending the crisis situation, may have less of an impact on such individuals. Indeed, they may present with little interest in food and water as a result of such low mood. In particular, it may be challenging to engage the individual in conversation, and they may further present as relatively “flat” in their emotions. The depressed perpetrator may feel they do not have the motivation or energy to maintain such discussions. This clearly presents with challenges for the negotiator as conversation can be an important aspect of developing a relationship with the individual,

and as part of the behavioral influence stairway. If the negotiator is able to initiate a level of conversation, then the topic must be considered carefully, such as one that will not exacerbate feelings of worthlessness and guilt. If such worthlessness and guilt were enhanced, then so may the potential for negative feelings on behalf of the perpetrator. The use of active listening and empathy would be important here, with the negotiator making efforts to appreciate the presenting distress of the perpetrator.

A useful approach for the negotiator may be to focus on previous occasions where the perpetrator has felt in a similar way, but where the situation got better. For example, it may be discussed that part of the crisis situation is around the perpetrators feelings that they are worthless and can offer nothing positive to those around them. The negotiator may then focus on previous situations where they have felt the same but where their emotions improved, and even what improved such emotions. This is with a view of emphasizing to the perpetrator that negative emotions do not always remain and can improve. In addition, focusing on successful events in their lives may further promote a more positive mindset for the individual in crisis.

When the negotiator is conversing with the depressed perpetrator it may be important to consider that, due to a lower motivation, lessening in their concentration and fatigue, they may benefit from further time to consider any questions posed. As such, the negotiator not rushing the perpetrator to a response may be helpful here, as well as expecting that the individual may on occasions “drift” away from the conversation. If the perpetrator does discuss issues around suicide and/or self-harm, it is important for this not to be ignored. The nature of such discussions should be considered carefully including;

- How long have they thought like this?
- Is any proposed plan they make a well considered plan?
- Have they attempted this in the past, and if so, what happened?
- Have they thought of this in the past, but changed their mind? If so, what caused them to change their mind?
- Have they the means of carrying out their plans?

It is crucial that the negotiator is wary of any sudden improvements in the perpetrator, which appear unrelated to the negotiations. For example, does the perpetrator suddenly appear more elated and positive in their thinking, which is not felt to be a result of the negotiation process? This may indeed reflect a decision in the individual to seriously self-harm or even commit suicide. Importantly the negotiators role here is not to provide therapy to the individual around the function of their self-harm or attempted suicides but rather to postpone suicidal action as opposed to changing the individual’s mood. For example, the negotiator may discuss that the perpetrator delays any decision to self-harm as opposed to persuading them not to do this and engaging in therapy with them. It is important that the perpetrator feels that, even if

they choose to end the crisis situation, they still have choices, as opposed to an “all or nothing debate”, and where the authorities can do little to manage the outcome. The view would be that, once outside of the crisis situation, their risk of self-harm and suicide could be more carefully managed.

CONCLUSIONS

It is hoped this chapter has highlighted that crisis negotiation is a complex and varied area. The behavioral influence stairway is an effective model by which to begin the negotiation process and to consider the development of clear approaches and tactics that are relevant for the presenting situation. The management of a crisis situation that is related to a domestic incident would not be unique to any other crisis situation, the same model would be applied, with appropriate modifications. Exploration of the presenting traits, characteristics and behavior of the perpetrator is an important focus which requires careful consideration and thought on behalf of the crisis negotiator. Whilst the motivation of a perpetrator is an important consideration in a crisis situation, this should not be to the exclusion of developing an effective relationship between the negotiator and perpetrator, and should refrain from an over emphasis on attempting to solve the presenting or perceived problem.

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