Northern Virginia Community College
Active Shooter Response Awareness

View this PPT in “presentation mode” with your computer’s volume up!
Introduction

• Active shooter (AS) situations can happen anywhere and without warning

• It CAN happen at NOVA

• They are unpredictable and evolve quickly

• To stop the shooting and mitigate harm requires immediate action and rapid deployment of law enforcement

• However, active shooter situations are often over within about 8-10 minutes, usually before law enforcement arrives on the scene

• This briefing provides vital guidance to faculty/staff/students on how to respond during these violent criminal attacks so they can be prepared, both mentally and physically, to deal with an active shooter situation
Active Shooter Profile

• An active shooter is a person actively engaged in killing/attempting to kill as many people as possible

• An active shooter may be a friend, colleague, acquaintance or stranger

• In most cases, active shooters use firearms with little recognizable pattern or selection of victims

• Usually begins shooting at people without warning. Motivation stems from mental dysfunction, revenge, rage, or vengeance
Active Shooter Profile (cont.)

• Common Traits
  – Chooses locations where there are a lot of people
    • Schools, malls, workplaces
    • Has some degree of familiarity with location
  – Assaul ts persons with whom they come in contact, and engage multiple targets quickly moving
  – May have planned attack and expect Law Enforcement response
  – Usually continues attacking, even with arrival of first responders
  – Usually (>90%) commits suicide; escape usually not an AS priority
  – Unlikely to negotiate

• Can you describe an active shooter?
Is this your Active Shooter?
(Expect the Unexpected)
Potential Workplace Violence
An Active Shooter

• Individuals typically do not just “snap”, but display indicators of potentially violent behavior over time. Often, these behaviors, if recognized, can be managed and treated.

• Signs of potentially violent behaviors may include some of the following:
  – Increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
  – Unexplained increase in absenteeism, vague physical complaints
  – Noticeable decrease in attention to appearance and hygiene
  – Depression/ withdrawal
  – Resistance and overreaction to changes in policy and procedures
  – Repeated violations of company/school policies
  – Increased severe mood swings
  – Noticeably unstable, emotional responses
  – Explosive outburst of anger or rage without provocation
  – Suicidal; comments about “putting things in order”
  – Behavior which is suspect of paranoia “everybody is against me”
  – Increasingly talks of problems at home
  – Escalation of domestic problems in the workplace; talk of severe financial problems
  – Talk of previous incidents of violence
  – Empathy with individuals committing violence
  – Increase in unsolicited comments about firearms, other dangerous weapons and violent crimes

This list of behaviors is not comprehensive; nor is it intended as a mechanism for diagnosing violent tendencies!
Potential Workplace Violence
Campus Assessment, Response and Evaluation (CARE) Teams

• NOVA (CARE) Team’s mission is to provide a systematic response to students whose behavior is disruptive to themselves, others, or the community. NOVA does not provide mental health services but does provide faculty, staff, and students with appropriate referrals.

• If you have a concern about behavior, submit a ‘NOVA Cares: Nova Concerning Behavior’ online form by clicking on the link below:

Response to An Active Shooter

• Your response will be dictated by the encounter’s specific circumstances.

• Is the shooter in your building, in your classroom, or across campus?

• How might you be alerted to an AS?
  – Running people, Screaming, Sound of gunfire, Text message, Computer pop-ups, Video screens, Email, In-Person, Phone

• Quickly determine the best way to protect your life
  – Students/visitors will follow the lead of faculty/staff in an AS situation

• You have 3 options:
  – Run
  – Hide
  – Fight
AS Response: Can You Evacuate?

• If there is an accessible escape path, evacuate the premises (PRIORITY)
  – Have an escape route and plan in mind
  – Evacuate if safe to do so and regardless of whether others agree to follow
    • Leave your bags, backpacks in the classroom
  – Help others escape, if possible
  – Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
  – Follow instructions of any police officers/first responders
  – Keep your hands visible at all times
  – Do not attempt to move wounded people
  – Call 911 or 703-764-5000

• Information to provide
  – Building Name
  – Location of Active Shooter
  – Number of Shooters, if more than one
  – Physical description of shooters
    » Weight, height, race, gender, clothing color & style
  – Number and type of weapons
    » Handgun, rifle, shotgun, explosives, unknown weapon
  – Number of potential victims
AS Response: Shelter in Place

• If evacuation is not possible, find a secure place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you
  – The safest place is inside a locked room with no windows
• Your hiding place should
  – Be out of the active shooter’s view
  – Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction
  – Not trap you or restrict your options or movement
• If the active shooter is nearby
  – Lock the door and turn off lights
  – Silence your cell phone and/or pager
  – Turn off sources of noise (radio, televisions)
  – Hide behind large items (desk, cabinets)
  – Remain quiet
• To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place
  – Lock the door
  – Blockade the door with heavy furniture
AS Response: Take Action (A Last Resort!)

- As a last resort, and **ONLY** when your life is in imminent danger, disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:
  - Acting as aggressively as possible against the shooter
    - Yell
    - Attack and secure the shooter
    - Throw items
    - Improvise weapons
  - Fight as if your life depends on it, because it does.
When Law Enforcement Arrives

- Law Enforcement’s priority is to stop the active shooter as soon as possible
  - Officer(s) will proceed directly to area where the AS is/last heard
  - Officers will arrive continuously
  - Officers may be dressed in regular patrol uniforms, external bulletproof vests, plain clothes, Kevlar helmets, and other tactical equipment
  - Officers will be armed with rifles, shotguns, and/or handguns
  - Officers may shout commands/push individuals to the ground

- The first officers to arrive will *not* stop to help injured people. Their task is to proceed immediately to the shooter and neutralize the threat
When LE Arrives (cont.)

- Responding officers may not know the identify of the AS. They will treat all people they encounter as possible suspects.
- You may be told to drop to the ground and temporarily restrained
  - Remain calm, and follow instructions
  - Do not carry items in your hands or on your person (bags, jackets)
  - Immediately raise hands and spread fingers
  - Keep hands visible at all times
  - Do not make quick movements toward officers
  - Avoid pointing, screaming, yelling, and/or trying to stop the officers
- Once you have reached a safe location you will be held in that area by Law Enforcement until the situation is under control and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.
NOVA PD INITIATIVES

- AS training at each campus (2012: 15 sessions; 300 attendees)
- Article in Public Safety Newsletter
- New Police General Order
- Annual all-hands training with certified trainer
- Familiarization with surrounding agencies
- Equipment (e.g., breaching tools)
- Realistic and frequent range training
- Outreach to Parking and Facilities for surveillance
- Mandated roll-call training
Active Shooter: Top 10 Themes

• An active shooter (AS) situation can develop anytime, anyplace.
• Today’s friend/colleague could be tomorrow’s AS.
• Expect the unexpected. Look at people’s behavior critically.
  – If you see something, say something!
• Police cannot prevent an AS, and will arrive while the incident is on-going.
• Time is critical. You must be prepared to act decisively.
• Have a plan for each location you frequent.
• Understand the difference between cover and concealment.
• Police will respond aggressively.
  – Do not get in the way or contribute to an already confusing situation.
  – Do not behave in a way that will make you be considered a suspect. Keep your hands visible, do not carry anything, and make no quick/unpredictable movements.
• NOVA Police have excellent response and tactical capabilities.
• Program NOVA Police Dispatch into your cell phones now: 703-764-5000.