



**Center for Personal Protection & Safety**  
Confidence starts here.

Stephen J. Romano  
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Senior Advisors  
FBI - Retired

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**Law Enforcement Responders**



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**Survival Mindset**  
and   
**Courses of Action**



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## Survival Mindset

- Odds of one's involvement in workplace violence
  - Workplace shootings can occur anytime, anywhere, to anyone
    - ◊ Unlike any situation ever experienced
  - Bottom Line: You need to take direct responsibility for your personal safety and security
  - Survival Mindset is a protective shield
    - ◊ Comprised of three components:  
**Awareness, Preparation, and Rehearsal**



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## Courses of Action

- Trained versus Untrained
  - First response is the same for both groups
  - Reactions begin to differ markedly from there on out

Trained	Untrained
Startle and Fear	Startle and Fear
Feel Anxious	Panic
Recall what they have learned	Fall into disbelief
Prepare to act as rehearsed	Lost in denial
Commit to action	Descend into helplessness



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## Courses of Action

- Survival Mindset
  - Enables you to act quickly and effectively
  - Mindful, not fearful
    - ◊ Airline safety briefing
    - ◊ Better able to make that first, critical decision
- Continuous assessment process
  - Allows you to take appropriate survival action
  - Use all senses
  - Trust your intuition—that “gut” feeling
    - ◊ Knowing without knowing why



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## “Shots Fired”

- > “Figure out”
- > “Get out”
- > “Call out”
- > “Hide out”
- > “Keep out”
- > “Spread out”
- > “Take out”

Arm Yourself with a Survival Mindset



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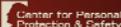
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## Courses of Action

- > Spread Out
  - > If two or more of you, DO NOT huddle together
    - ◊ Gives you options and makes it harder for the shooter
  - > Quietly develop a plan of action in the event the shooter enters
  - > Remain calm
    - ◊ Can have a contagious effect on others
    - ◊ Keeps others focused on survival



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## Courses of Action

- > Take Out
  - > Assume shooter’s intentions are lethal
  - > Shooter will succeed in killing all those with whom he comes in contact, UNLESS you stop him
  - > Develop a survival mindset that you have “what it takes” to survive when your life is on the line



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## Courses of Action

- Take Out (Cont'd)
  - You must be prepared to do whatever it takes to neutralize the threat
    - ◊ Throw things, yell, use improvised weapons
    - ◊ If two or more of you, make a plan to overcome the shooter
    - ◊ Do the best that you can—choose to survive



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*“Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”*

- Dylan Thomas



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## Distinctions Between an Active Shooter and a Hostage Situation



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**Active Shooter vs. Hostage Situation**

- Hostage Situation
  - Involves an armed and dangerous individual who may or may not have already used deadly force
  - In most cases, his access will be restricted; significant difference is the containment of the offender and victim
  - Motive can vary between substantive or expressive



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**Active Shooter vs. Hostage Situation**

- Hostage survival can be enhanced if you:
  - Remain calm
  - Follow directions
  - Avoid sudden movements
  - Maintain eye contact (but don't stare)
  - Find the middle position (not too assertive/passive)
  - Personalize yourself
  - Don't argue
  - Don't be a nuisance
  - Don't turn your back



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**Active Shooter vs. Hostage Situation**

- Law Enforcement Negotiation Efforts
  - Will take time; be mentally prepared for a protracted situation
  - Law Enforcement negotiators will use active listening skills to:
    - ◊ Communicate with hostage-taker
    - ◊ Defuse emotions
    - ◊ Build rapport
    - ◊ Work towards a peaceful resolution
  - Historically, most hostage situations have been resolved through negotiations and ended peacefully



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