



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS

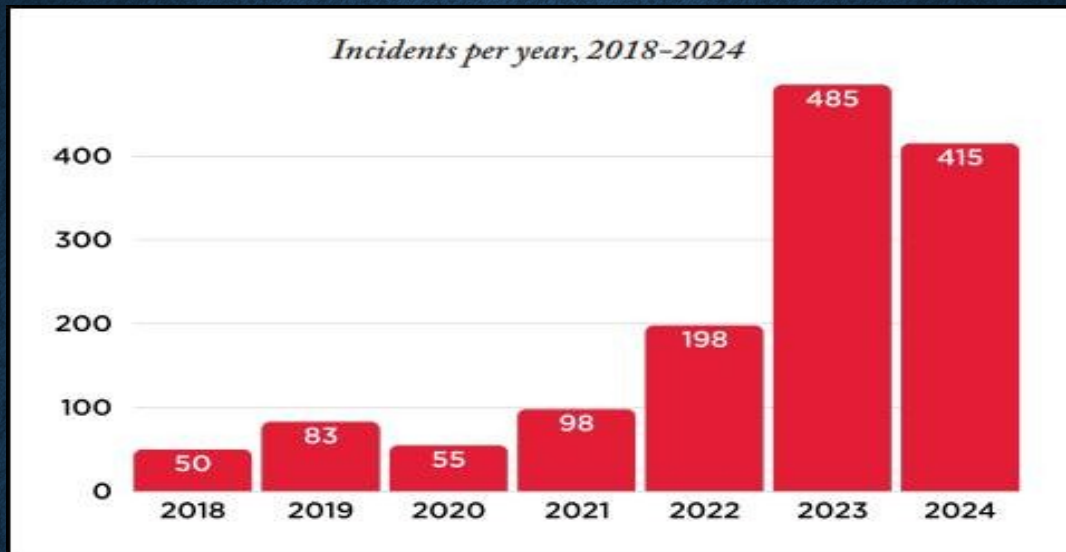
SAFETY AND SECURITY TEAM TRAINING

Ecclesiastes 3:8, there is "a time for war and a time for peace." The modern church must be equipped to provide both – offering sanctuary while prepared for adversity.

Safety and Security Team Training

In 2026 houses of worship throughout this country face an increasing number of threats ranging from active shooters, property crimes, civil disturbances, and protest to medical and weather emergencies. The importance of a well-organized and trained church safety and security team cannot be overstated. This basic team development training aims to break down in simple terms what a safety and security team should look like. The roles of the team members and techniques they may help to de-escalate disruptive individuals.

A parish safety team's purpose is not simply security—it is protecting people while supporting ministry. Effective teams combine vigilance, preparedness, servant leadership, and compassion to help ensure the church remains a safe place for worship and fellowship.



In its annual "Hostility Against Churches" report the Family Research Council documented at least 415 hostile acts targeting 383 churches across 43 states in 2024. On average, there were 35 attacks against U.S. churches each month in 2024.

284 acts of vandalism

55 incidents of arson

14 bomb threats

28 acts of armed aggression

47 incidents of assault, threats, or disruptions

What are the Goals of Your Parish Safety Team?

Protect People

Safeguard parishioners, visitors, staff, and volunteers.

Maintain a Welcoming Environment

Maintain a balance between security with hospitality.

Prevent and Deter Threats

Identify suspicious behavior and report safety concerns.

Prepare for Emergencies

Develop an emergency response plans and procedures to respond to emergencies. Conduct drills and/or tabletop exercises for fire, severe weather, medical emergencies, and security incidents.

Respond to Emergencies

Coordinate with first responders when there are medical, safety, or security incidents.

Promote Safety Awareness

Educate other congregation members on safety practices and encourage reporting of concerns or suspicious activity.

Emergency Response Plan (ERP)



Emergencies rarely provide a warning-but preparation can make all the difference.

An effective Emergency Response Plan (ERP) establishes clear expectations, a clear line of communication, evacuation procedures, and establishes roles before an emergency occurs.

Ask yourself:

- ✓ Does everyone know how to report an emergency?
- ✓ Are evacuations routes clearly identified and displayed?
- ✓ Can everyone be accounted for within minutes?
- ✓ Have emergency roles been assigned?
- ✓ Are drills conducted on a regular basis?
- ✓ The best emergency response plan is simple, practiced and continuously improved.

Three Circles of Security

PARKING LOTS



EXTERIOR/INTERIOR
DOORS



CHURCH
INTERIOR



Team Checklist

Security Team & Training

- Select trusted volunteers or staff for a security role.
- Provide training on conflict de-escalation and emergency response.
- Conduct regular safety drills.

Access Control

- Lock unused doors during services.
- Assign greeters or ushers to monitor entrances.

Emergency Preparedness

- Have a written emergency plan for fire, medical, severe weather, active threats.
- Post evacuation routes in visible areas.
- Know the locations of AED's, first aid kits and fire extinguishers.

Child & Youth Safety

- Use secure check-in/check-out systems for children's ministry.
- Require background checks for all volunteers working with minors.

Incident Reporting

- Keep a log of any suspicious activity or incidents.

Practical Applications for Church Safety Teams

Parking Lot

- Greet individuals as they arrive.
- Offer directions or assistance.

Main Entrance / Narthex

- Welcome guests.
- Identify first-time visitors.
- Observe behavior and demeanor.

Children's Ministry Check-In

- Assist families.
- Monitor access control procedures.
- Verify authorized pickups.

Sanctuary and Common Areas

- Engage with attendees before and after services.
- Watch for individuals who appear distressed or disruptive.

Key Team Roles

Team Leader

A team leader is responsible for team coordination. They will serve as point of contact (POC) with first responders in the event an emergency or non-emergency call was made. The team leader should also maintain documentation for the team members.

Greeters/Ushers

Serve roles in hospitality, threat detection and identifying suspicious behavior. Greeters and ushers should also document any suspicious activity they observe.

Medical Responder

If possible, have a team member that has emergency medical training (doctor, nurse, EMT/Paramedic) and is ready and willing to assist in the event of a medical emergency.

Rover / Rapid Responder

This team member is mobile and can be positioned anywhere there may be a weak point. This team member is also available to support any other team member and can help to intervene to de-escalate a volatile situation.

The Three Goals of Every Greeting

1. Welcome

A welcoming gesture or encounter makes people feel valued and accepted.

Example:

- "Good morning! We're glad you're here."

2. Engage

Try to create a brief conversation.

Example:

- "Is this your first visit with us?"

3. Assess

While engaging with someone observe their behavior while remaining friendly.

Look for:

- Body language
- Emotional state
- Signs of distress
- Inconsistencies in responses
- Unusual actions

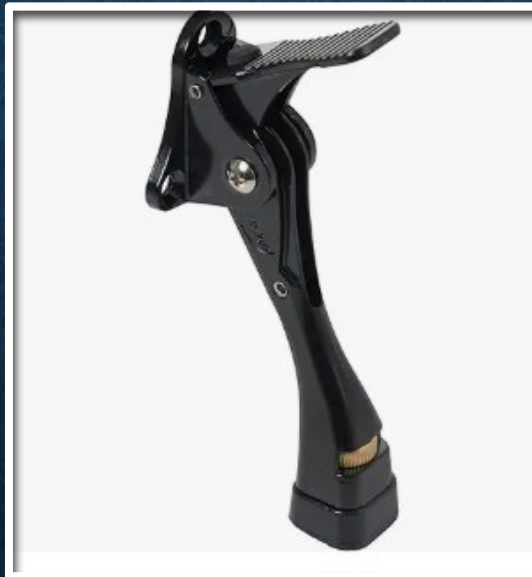
BASIC SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- Two-way radios are an effective and cost-efficient way for team members to communicate.
- Use a whistle for audible alerts.
- High visibility vest help to identify a team member and provides additional safety in a parking lot.



BASIC SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- Safety equipment can be purchased at a reasonable price.
- Signs to notate a shelter in place location.
- Door stops for securing a room.
- Flashlights for a power outage.



Be Ready for an Emergency

Every parish should have a plan in place for common medical issues. Incidents of fainting, an allergic reaction, or a fall can result in minor or major injuries.

- First aid kits and AEDs, clearly marked and easy to reach.
- Team members trained in CPR, basic first aid and Stop the Bleed protocols.
- A plan for how to call 911 and direct EMS to the right spot

Your safety and security team should periodically check all first aid kits. Verify if all the supplies are within their expiration date and to take an inventory of the kit to restock any used supplies.



Trauma Kit Essentials

1. Tactical Combat Casualty Care (CoTCCC) approved tourniquets -

CAT Tourniquet Gen 7 by North American Rescue

2. Wound-Packing Gauze - Wound-packing gauze is placed inside the laceration and fixed in place with bandages.

3. Hemostatic Gauze - The gauze is impregnated with chemicals or substances that promote blood clotting.

4. Chest Seal - A vented chest seal treats a penetrating wound to the chest.

5. Emergency Trauma Dressing - Sterile trauma pad to place directly on the wound.

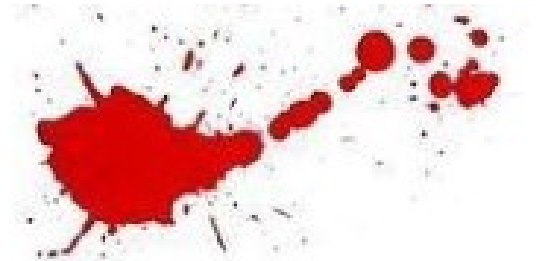
6. Survival Blanket - Survival Maintaining a patient's body heat is critical to preventing or alleviating symptoms of shock or hypothermia.

Normal Adult Blood Volume



5 Liters Blood Volume

losing one liter of blood



4.0 Liters Blood Volume



20% of total blood volume

still perfectly alert

full pulse present

heart rate elevated (about 100 or more bpm)

blood pressure and respiratory rate are normal lying down
but may be elevated if active

it's gonna suck, but they won't die

losing two liters of blood



40% of total blood volume

very confused and lethargic

pulse is super weak

heart rate above 120 bpm

breathing fast and shallow

**THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THEY
WILL DIE AT THIS POINT**





BLOOD LOSS

A person who is bleeding can die from blood loss within 5 minutes if the bleeding is not stopped or slowed.

Reporting Time

Realization Time



~3 - 7 minutes



Process Time



~2 - 10 minutes



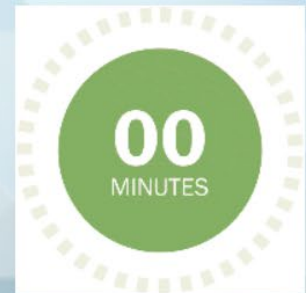
Response Time



~3 - 5 minutes



Bleeding Time



~8 - 22 minutes

The **Fastest, Safest,**
Most **Effective** Prehospital Field Tourniquet



CAT COMBAT APPLICATION
TOURNIQUET

CAT TOURNIQUET
NORTH AMERICAN RESCUE

Situational Awareness

- Perception: Recognizing elements in your environment.
- Comprehension: Understanding the significance of these elements.
- Projection: Anticipating the future based on the information you have.

Verbal De-escalation Techniques

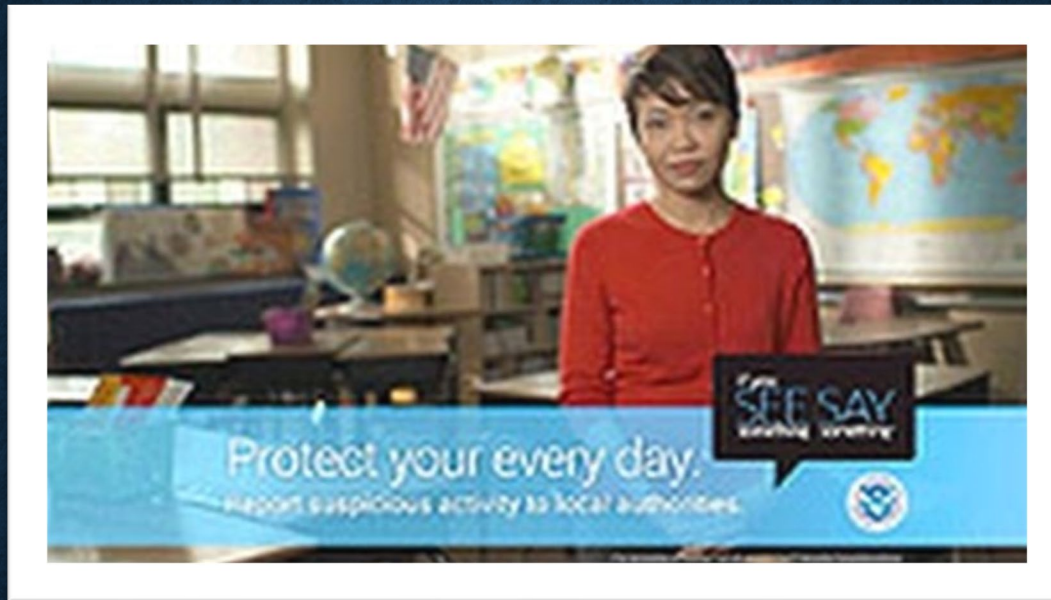
- *Time*: Be patient. Giving an individual time to “vent” may allow them to calm themselves down.
- *Humility*: Show empathy when dealing with an agitated person. Many times, they just want to express their frustration with a situation.
- *Emotional Management*: Always remain calm and remain in emotional control. Do not let an agitated entice into an argument.

Medical Response

- CPR training, AED use, Stop-the-Bleed training.

Evacuation and Lockdown Protocols:

- Have evacuation diagrams in place. Identify a safe room in the event of a weather emergency or lockdown.



**IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY
SOMETHING**

If You See Something, Say Something!

BE CONCERNED!

No law enforcement agency can function effectively without the assistance of responsible citizens.

Some people fail to contact their law enforcement agency simply because they are not aware of what seemingly innocent activities might be suspicious. Others may be hesitant to call for fear of seeming a nosy.

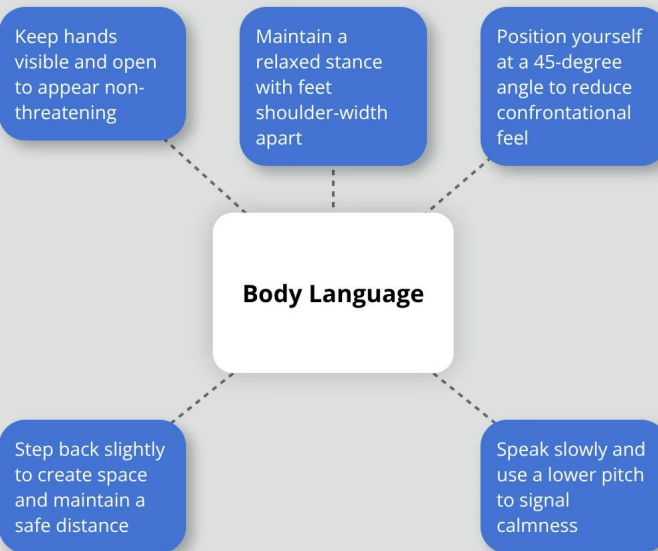
Call your local law enforcement agency immediately about all suspicious activity. Think about what could happen if you do not act.

INFORMATION NEEDED!

The law enforcement agency will need to know the following information should you make a call regarding suspicious activity:

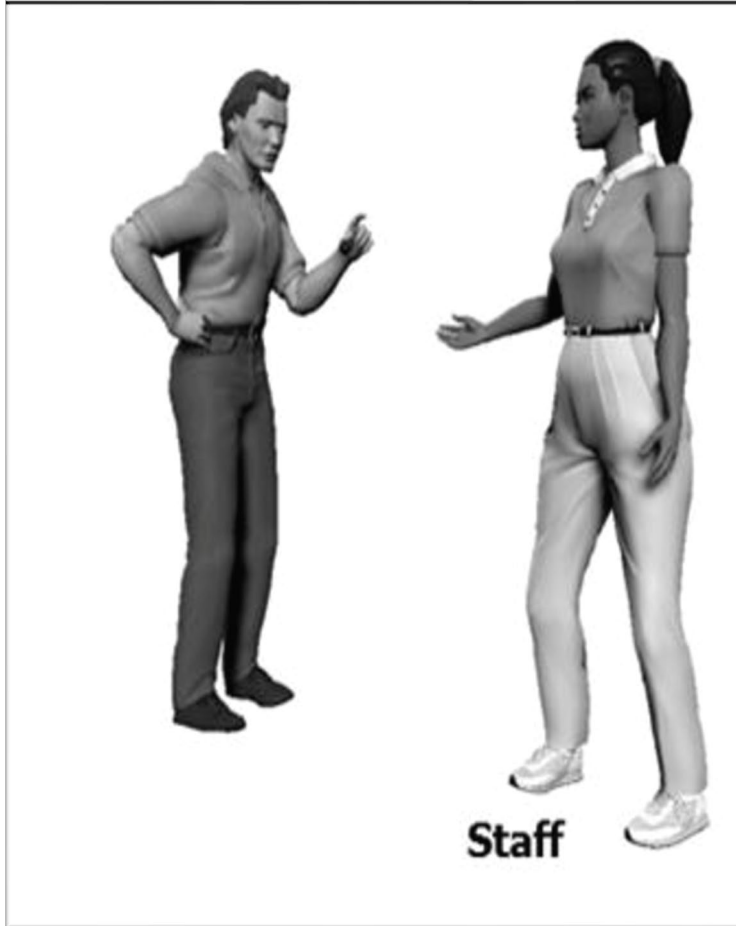
- What happened?
- When did it take place?
- Where did it take place?
- Was anyone injured?
- If a vehicle was involved, what was the vehicle license number?

Key Aspects of Body Language in De-escalation



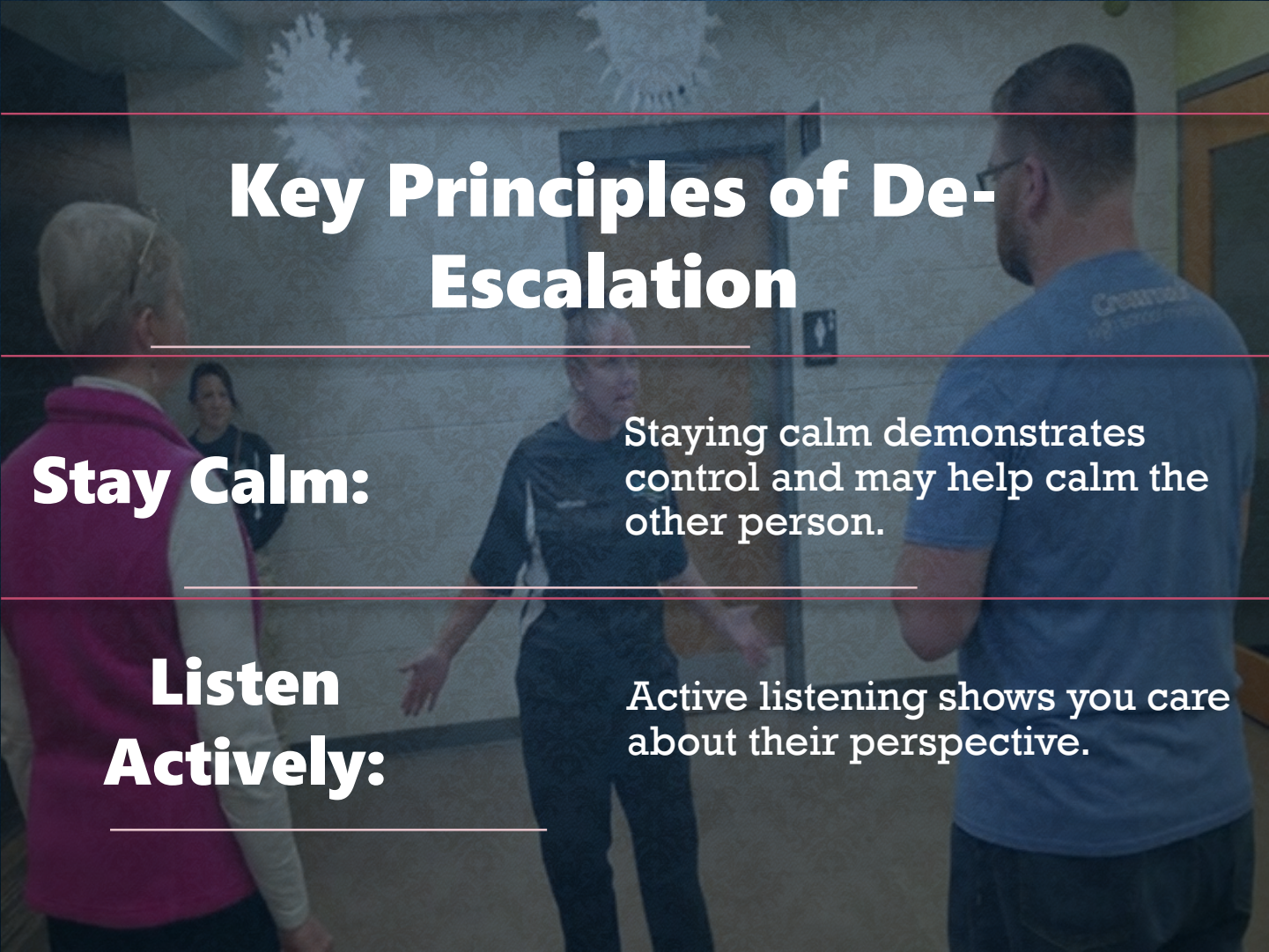
- **Body Language:** Keep your hands visible, open, and at your sides. Avoid crossing arms, pointing fingers, or clenching fists.
- **Movement:** Use slow, deliberate movements. Avoid sudden, erratic movements or pacing.
- **Escape Route:** Never corner a person; ensure they have an exit route, and you have one as well.
- **Physical Safety:** If the person moves closer, maintain your distance by stepping back to keep the space between you.

Key Principles for Maintaining Space



Optimal Distance: Maintain at least 1.5 to 3 feet of distance (Supportive Stance) to reduce feelings of being threatened. In some situations, increasing this to 12 feet (public space distance) is appropriate.

Angle Yourself: Avoid standing directly in front of the person (confrontational); instead, stand to the side to appear less threatening.



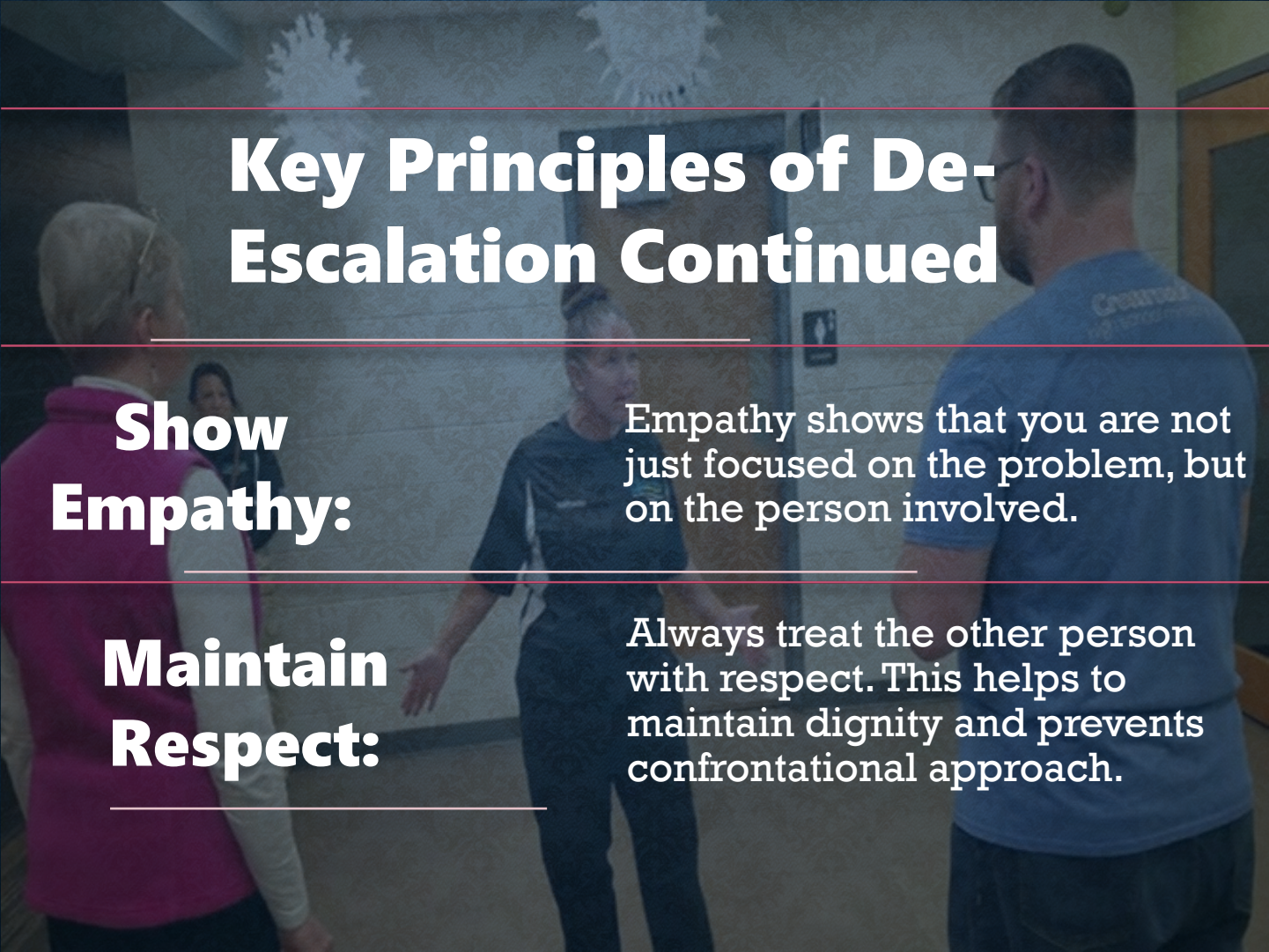
Key Principles of De-Escalation

Stay Calm:

Staying calm demonstrates control and may help calm the other person.

Listen Actively:

Active listening shows you care about their perspective.



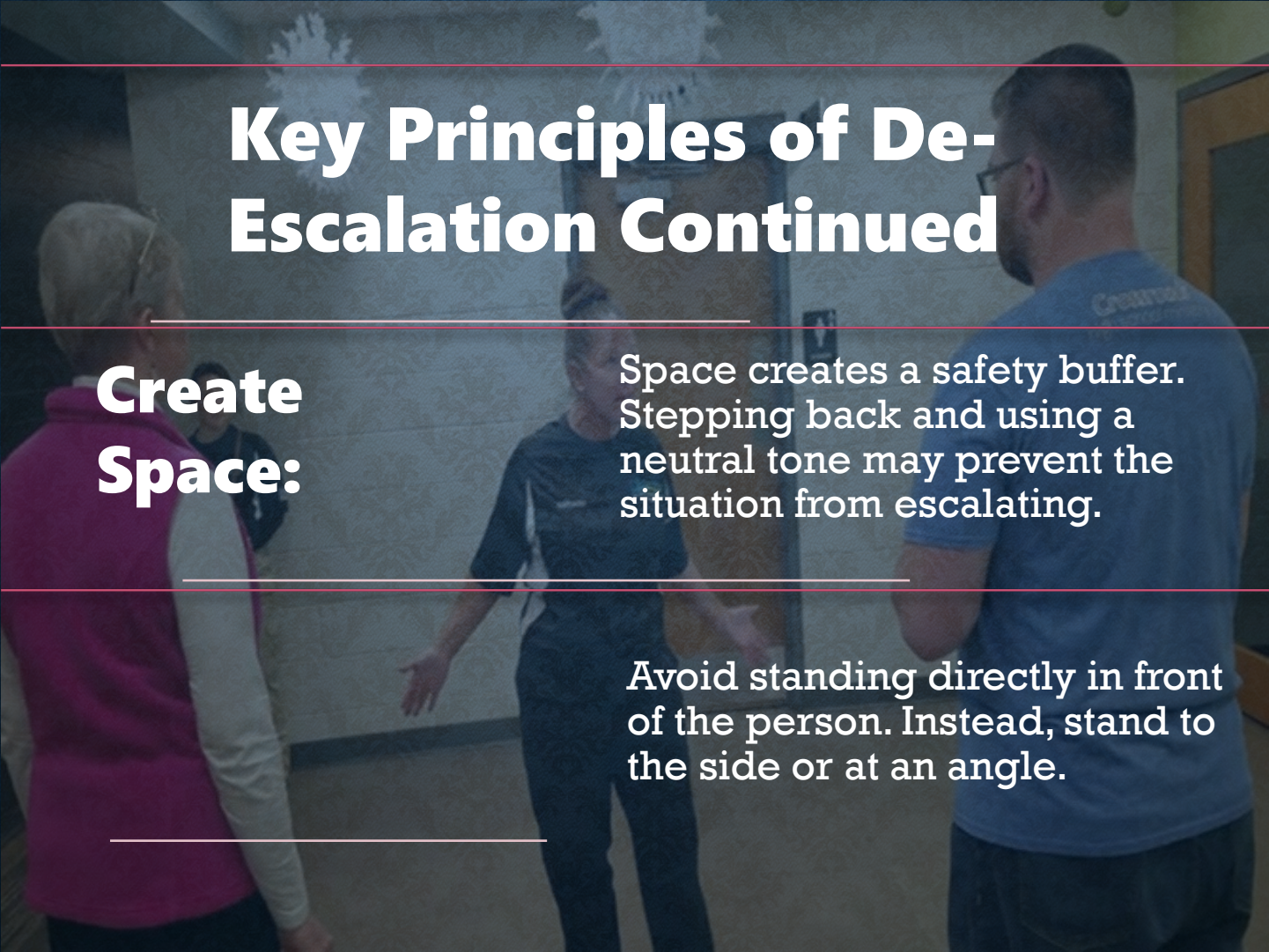
Key Principles of De- Escalation Continued

Show Empathy:

Empathy shows that you are not just focused on the problem, but on the person involved.

Maintain Respect:

Always treat the other person with respect. This helps to maintain dignity and prevents confrontational approach.



Key Principles of De-Escalation Continued

Create Space:

Space creates a safety buffer. Stepping back and using a neutral tone may prevent the situation from escalating.

Avoid standing directly in front of the person. Instead, stand to the side or at an angle.

Stay Physically Calm

What It Is:

Maintaining controlled and non-threatening body language is key to de-escalation. Physical posture, gestures, and facial expressions have a profound impact on how a situation unfolds.

Why It Works:

Aggressive body language or raised voices can increase tension. Maintaining an open and calm posture signals to the other person that you're not a threat, which can help lower their emotional intensity.

How to Implement:

- Maintain a relaxed posture: Keep your arms uncrossed, stand or sit in a neutral position, and avoid making sudden or erratic movements.
- Control your facial expressions: Stay calm and composed, even if the other person becomes agitated.
- Control your tone of voice: Keep your voice steady and lower than normal. Avoid shouting or speaking too quickly.

Active Listening

What It Is:

Active listening is the process of fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and remembering what the other person is saying. It involves not just hearing the words, but also paying attention to non-verbal cues, emotions, and tone of voice.

Why It Works:

When a person feels heard, their sense of frustration and anger is reduced. Active listening can create an opening for dialogue and understanding, which defuses the emotional intensity of a conflict.

How to Implement:

- Use non-verbal cues: Nod, make eye contact, and maintain an open posture.
- Paraphrase what's been said: "What I hear you saying is..."
- Ask clarifying questions: "Could you help me understand...?"
- Avoid interrupting: Let the person finish their point before responding.

Show Empathy

What It Is:

Validating emotions involves acknowledging the emotional experience of the other person and making them feel heard and understood.

Why It Works:

When emotions are validated, individuals feel respected, which can diffuse hostility and open the door to constructive communication. Acknowledging someone's emotions doesn't mean agreeing with them but simply recognizing their feelings as real and valid.

How to Implement:

- Acknowledge the emotion: "I can see that you're really upset about this."
- Empathize: "It makes sense that you would feel frustrated after that situation."
 - Reaffirm their right to feel the way they do: "It's okay to feel angry about this. Let's see how we can resolve it together."

Offer Solutions

What It Is:

Rather than dwelling on the problem or blame, offering potential solutions helps shift the focus from what went wrong to how it can be fixed. People often get stuck in conflict, but moving toward resolution can break the cycle.

Why It Works:

Focusing on solutions shifts the dynamic from confrontation to collaboration. It gives both parties a sense of control and purpose and empowers them to work together toward a mutually beneficial outcome.

How to Implement:

- Acknowledge the problem: "I see that this issue is frustrating for you."
- Offer potential solutions: "Let's explore a few options to resolve this."
- Be open to feedback: "What do you think would work best for both of us?"
- Set action steps: Make sure both parties are clear about the next steps to avoid confusion.

If an Individual Has or Displays a Weapon of Any Kind

- Stay as calm as you can.
- Use your voice to help diffuse the situation.
- Create distance between you and the armed person.
- Use a predetermined hand signal or gesture to your other team members to call 911.
- Initiate your church lockdown protocols.

What to Do If Threatened With a Knife

Try to De-Escalate:

If an attacker approaches you, you need to stay calm. Any sudden moves or actions may startle them and escalate the violence. Try to stay as focused and relaxed as possible.

Size Up Your Attacker:

Attackers are motivated by different reasons. Are they a "mugger"? They may be mentally unstable or under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Try to figure out what kind of person you're dealing with.

Ask Them What They Want:

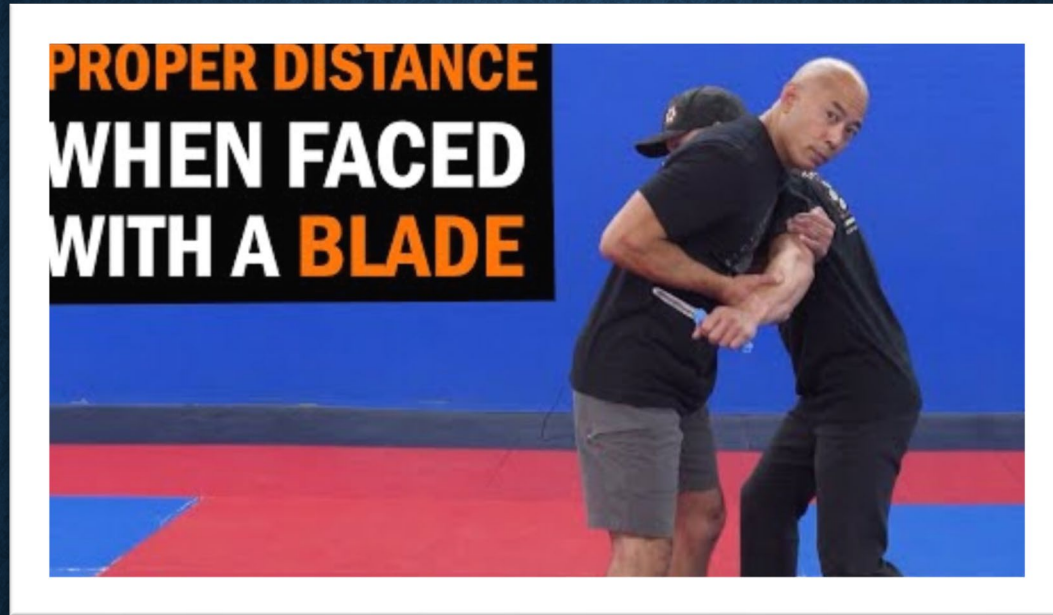
If its your valuables then let them have it. Phones and jewelry can be replaced, but your life and health cannot.

Yell for Help:

Yell out "Stop!" or "Someone help me!" Use your voice to make it clear that you're in trouble and someone may come to your aid.

RUN AWAY:

An attacker with a knife is unpredictable. Running is your best chance of survival.



CREATE SPACE FOR SAFETY



RUN – HIDE - FIGHT

Active Shooter Alert

PA System: This is the best and most effective method of alerting all students, staff and parishioners of an active shooter incident. The alert should be multilingual if necessary. Short and concise, "LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN. THIS IS NOT A DRILL"

Desk Phone Intercoms: Each desk phone has an intercom feature with the capability to alert staff to a site wide active assailant incident.

Handheld Radios: use handheld radios to issue an alert of an active assailant incident directly to the security office.

Visual Alarms: Flashlights can be used to alert deaf or hard-of-hearing personnel.



Run:

- Have an escape plan. Know your emergency exits.
- Quickly and cautiously evacuate in a direction away from the attacker.
- Don't hesitate. Seconds Matter.
- Leave belongings behind. Keep empty hands raised and clearly visible.
- Help others if possible.
- Follow all instructions from the police.
- Don't stop until you are sure you have reached a safe location.

Call 9-1-1 only when it is safe to do so

Active Shooter Evacuation

If capable of evacuating and choosing to do so, personnel should observe the following guidelines:

- Plan your exit route thoughtfully.
- Check your surroundings before you move.
- Anticipate multiple attackers.
- Use your surroundings (e.g., cars, walls, trees) for cover and concealment.
- Be alert! Look for any other threats originating from inside the school/church.
- Run to the furthest identified safe area.

Once at the safe area or other secure location:

- Survey your surroundings for other potential dangers or attackers.
- When it is safe to do so, contact someone to let them know your location and you are safe.
- If security is compromised at the safe area, move!

Hide:

- If there is no safe escape route, find a good hiding place.
- Lock and barricade the door.
- Silence cell phones and stay as quiet.

Fight:

- Fight only as a last resort.
- Use available objects as improvised weapons.
- Use teamwork. Incapacitate an attacker.
- Attack with violence and ferocity.

Call 9-1-1 only when it is safe to do so

Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

- Make sure the AED is maintained and tested according to the manufacturer's operational guidelines.
- Register the existence and location of the AED with the primary provider of emergency services in your location within 30 days of acquisition.
- Ensure your "expected AED users" receive proper training in CPR and AED use.
- Have a supervising physician who is licensed to practice medicine in TN approve the placement of the AED and the program details (eg. registration, training, names of trained employees, report format, etc.).
- Contact emergency services as soon as possible whenever the AED is used and provide a report to the supervising physician every time it is used.



HOW TO USE A DEFIBRILLATOR (AED)

The Good Samaritan laws in Tennessee (TCA 63-6-218 and 63-1-156) encourage bystanders to provide reasonable assistance during emergencies without fear of civil liability or criminal prosecution. These laws protect individuals who act in good faith, without compensation, and are not guilty of gross negligence.

General Civil Immunity:

- **Protection from Lawsuits:** Individuals who provide, in good faith and without compensation, emergency care at the scene of an accident, medical emergency, or disaster are generally immune from civil liability.
- **Scope of Aid:** This includes providing aid, using an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), or assisting medical personnel.
- **What is NOT Covered:** The law does not protect individuals who exhibit "gross negligence" or "willful misconduct," which is defined as conduct that shows a reckless disregard for the safety of others.
- **No Duty to Aid:** The law does not mandate that individuals help others in need but protects them if they choose to do so.

What is the difference between a Watch and Warning?

The National Weather Service in Las Vegas issues out warnings, watches, advisories and an outlook for weather hazards. But do you know what these terms mean?



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Las Vegas

Severe Weather Response

Step 1: Identify Safe Shelters

Identify the safest place or places to ride out a storm.

- Select a basement, or an interior hallway away from doors and windows.
- Avoid areas with high or free-span roofs, like the sanctuary or gymnasium.
- If your church campus is comprised of more than one building, designate shelters in each building.

Step 2: Responsibilities of the Safety and Security Team

- Escort people to designated shelters in the event of a storm warning.
- Post evacuation routes and procedures in highly visible areas throughout the property.
- Assist with children and people with disabilities.

Step 3: Practice a Severe Weather Drill

- Have at least one yearly drill with your safety and security members. Have additional drills for any new members that may join the team during the year.

Severe Weather Response Continued

Step 4: Monitor Storms

- Have a weather radio available.

Step 5: Ensure a Safe Release

When the severe weather has passed, help the congregation exit safely.

- Team members should sweep the buildings, parking lots and areas around the church to ensure it is safe to exit safe zones.

Step 6: Reunite Families

Your severe weather emergency plan should include steps to help parishioners reunite with their loved ones.

- Designate a central area where family members and groups can reunite.

Personal Liability and Firearm Use in Tennessee

Every Round Fired Has a Lawyer Attached to It

Even if the initial use of force was justified, injury to an innocent bystander can create liability.

Self-Defense Must Be Reasonable

Tennessee law generally requires that the person reasonably believe they are facing an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury before using deadly force.

Civil Lawsuits Are Still Possible

Even when a shooting is ruled justified, family members of the offender may still attempt to file a lawsuit, which can be expensive and stressful.

Tennessee Provides Civil Immunity for Justified Self-Defense

Tennessee law provides immunity from civil liability when force is used lawfully under the state's self-defense statutes.

Civil Immunity Has Exceptions

You injure or kill an innocent bystander.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, church safety is essential for fostering a secure and welcoming environment for all parishioners and staff. Implementing comprehensive safety protocols, including emergency preparedness plans, effective communication, trained personnel, and collaboration with local law enforcement, can significantly reduce risks and protect the congregation. Continuous education and training for staff and volunteers further enhance safety measures, ensuring that everyone is prepared to respond effectively in case of an emergency. Prioritizing safety not only safeguards the physical well-being of our parishioners but also promotes spiritual growth and community trust within the parish environment.

Memphis Police Department Phone Numbers

EMERGENCY Dial 911

For NON-EMERGENCY Dial 545-COPS (2677)

MPD Precinct Numbers:

Ridgeway Station, 3840 Ridgeway Road, 901-636-4500

Airways Station, 2234 Truitt, 901-636-4800

Mt. Moriah Station, 2602 Mt. Moriah, 901-636-4199

Raines Station, 791 E. Raines, 901-636-4599

Appling Farms Station, 6850 Appling Farms Parkway, 901-636-4400

Tillman Station, 426 Tillman, 901-636-3000

Austin Peay Station, 3430 Austin Peay, 901-636-4399

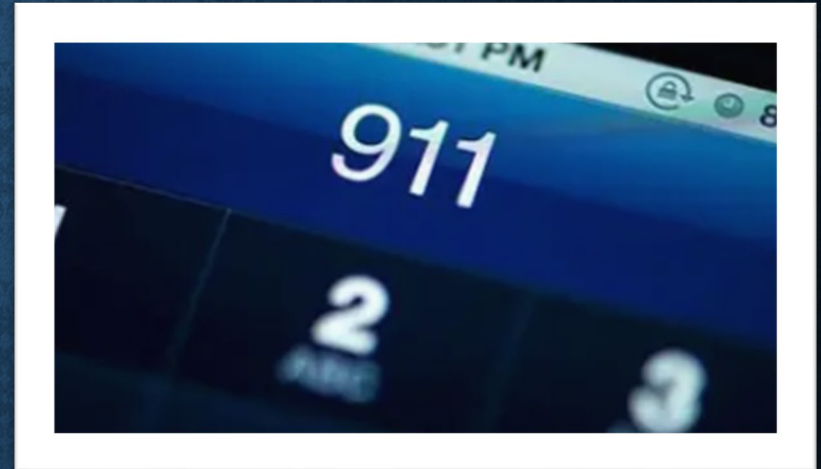
Crump Station, 949 E. H. Crump Blvd., 901-636-4600

North Main Station, 444 N. Main St., 901-636-4099

IMPORTANT:

Calls for police assistance DO NOT originate from the police stations.

ALL CALLS are routed either through 911 for an EMERGENCY or 901-545-2677 for a NON-EMERGENCY.



THANK YOU

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