Domestic Violence Intervention

Domestic Violence Intervention prepares public safety telecommunicators to recognize the dynamics of domestic violence and respond to these calls with a victim-focused, safety-oriented, and investigative approach. The course emphasizes the telecommunicator's role as the first responder on the scene, including protecting victims and responders, gathering detailed information, providing appropriate pre-arrival instructions, documenting evidence, interacting with child callers, preparing for courtroom testimony, and reducing agency and individual liability.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the role of the telecommunicator in domestic violence incidents and the importance of a victim-focused approach.
2. Describe the dynamics, forms, patterns, and contributing factors associated with domestic violence.
3. Apply structured questioning and communication techniques when handling domestic violence calls.
4. Identify safety concerns for victims, children, telecommunicators, and responding officers.
5. Apply appropriate pre-arrival survival instructions and safe-environment strategies.
6. Communicate critical information to responders to improve situational awareness and officer safety.
7. Describe the telecommunicator's role as a witness and prepare for effective courtroom testimony.
8. Identify sources of 911 liability in domestic violence calls and methods for reducing that liability.

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Module 1: Introduction

This module introduces the telecommunicator's role in domestic violence intervention. Learners examine the importance of empathy, victim-focused communication, caller and responder safety, suspect apprehension, detailed documentation, and specialized training. The module reinforces that the telecommunicator is the first person on the scene and that the questions, decisions, and actions taken during the call may influence victim survival, responder safety, prosecution, and agency liability.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the telecommunicator's role as the first person on the scene during a domestic violence call.
2. Describe the importance of empathy and a victim-focused approach when communicating with domestic violence victims.
3. Identify environmental risks that may affect victim and responder safety.
4. Explain why detailed information gathering and documentation are important to investigation and prosecution.
5. Describe the need for specialized training in handling highly emotional domestic violence calls.

Content/Activities

- Your Role in Domestic Violence Calls
- Victim-Focused Communication
- Identifying Dangerous Environments
- First on the Scene
- Domestic Violence Intervention Training
- Video: *Domestic Violence Intervention Training*
- Brainteasers

Module 2: Dynamics of Domestic Violence

This module explores the nature and dynamics of domestic violence, including patterns of control, forms of abuse, characteristics associated with victims and batterers, and barriers that may prevent victims from leaving abusive relationships. Learners examine domestic violence laws, victim advocacy, immigrant victim concerns, the Power and Control Wheel, stalking, and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act as presented in the course.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Define domestic violence and identify common forms and patterns of abuse.
2. Describe psychological and situational obstacles that may prevent victims from leaving abusive relationships.
3. Identify characteristics and behaviors associated with victims and batterers as presented in the course.
4. Explain barriers immigrant victims may face when seeking law enforcement, legal, or social-service assistance.
5. Describe the role of victim advocacy, protective orders, stalking laws, and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act in domestic violence response.

Content/Activities

- Domestic Violence Definitions and Statistics
- Public Opinion and Victim Advocacy
- Who Can Be a Victim of Domestic Violence?
- Battered Woman's Syndrome and Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act
- Why Victims Stay: Psychological and Situational Obstacles
- Immigrant Victims and the Power & Control Wheel
- Batterer Characteristics, Forms of Domestic Violence, and Stalking
- Videos and Brainteasers

Module 3: Tactics for Handling the Domestic Violence Call

This module provides practical strategies for managing domestic violence calls. Learners apply the Journalistic Investigative Approach, the Emergency Communication Dispatch Process, safe-environment concepts, pre-arrival survival instructions, and techniques for managing highly emotional callers. The module also addresses the Cycle of Violence, detailed injury and suspect information, protective orders, red flags, weapons, caller location, children at the scene, and other critical information needed by responders.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Apply the Journalistic Investigative Approach to obtain primary and secondary information during domestic violence calls.
2. Assess the caller's environment and provide appropriate pre-arrival survival and safe-environment instructions.
3. Apply communication techniques for callers who have reached a high emotional or hysteria threshold.
4. Identify red flags, weapons, injuries, protective orders, suspect information, and other factors requiring immediate attention.
5. Gather and relay detailed information that supports victim safety, officer safety, suspect apprehension, and later prosecution.

Content/Activities

- Audio: *My Husband Punched Me*
- Journalistic Investigative Approach
- Emergency Communication Dispatch Process
- Safe Environment and Pre-Arrival Survival Instructions
- Hysteria Threshold and Repetitive Persistence
- Cycle of Violence and Additional DV Call Tactics
- Key Questions, Red Flags, Weapons, Injuries, and Protective Orders
- Audio Scenarios and Brainteasers

Module 4: Children and Domestic Violence

This module focuses on children who witness or directly experience domestic violence and on the special communication needs of child 911 callers. Learners examine the risks domestic violence creates for children and practice age-appropriate communication techniques designed to reduce fear, avoid confusion, build confidence, and maintain communication until responders arrive.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Describe the potential emotional and behavioral effects of domestic violence on children.
2. Explain why child callers may require different communication techniques than adult callers.
3. Use vocabulary and questioning appropriate to a child's level of understanding.
4. Apply strategies such as one-question-at-a-time communication, praise, reassurance, and familiar conversation topics.
5. Identify methods for reducing fear and helping a child remain engaged with the call taker until responders arrive.

Content/Activities

- Children and Domestic Violence
- Video: *Children Suffering in Silence*
- Risks to Children in Violent Homes
- Child Callers Reporting Domestic Violence
- Age-Appropriate Vocabulary and Questioning
- Praise, Reassurance, and Familiar Subjects
- Video: *I Just Killed My Daughter*
- Brainteasers

Module 5: Preparing and Protecting Responders

This module focuses on the telecommunicator's responsibility to gather, verify, and relay information that improves responder safety during domestic violence incidents. Learners revisit investigative questioning, weapons information, Inverted Visualization, caller and suspect descriptions, safe-environment instructions, use of CAD and other technology, threat recognition, protective orders, history of violence, and responder status checks.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Gather critical information about weapons, hazards, suspects, victims, and other persons at the scene.
2. Apply Inverted Visualization to describe locations from the responding officer's perspective.
3. Use CAD and available communications technology to identify previous incidents, weapons, threats, or other safety concerns.
4. Relay changing conditions and threatening statements clearly and accurately to responding officers.
5. Apply appropriate communication, mirroring, history checks, protective-order inquiries, and status checks to support responder safety.

Content/Activities

- Preparing and Protecting Police Officers
- Journalistic Investigative Approach for Responder Safety
- Inverted Visualization
- Victim and Suspect Descriptions
- CAD, MDT, and Technology for Officer Safety
- Audio: *Advised Threat*
- Audio: *Status Check*
- Brainteasers

Module 6: Courtroom Testimony and the Telecommunicator

This module examines the telecommunicator's role as a witness in domestic violence cases. Learners explore the importance of the 911 recording as evidence, the concept of the telecommunicator as a "Fresh Complaint Witness," courtroom appearance and demeanor, preparation for testimony, principles of effective testimony, stages of questioning, and methods for responding to defense counsel tactics.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the evidentiary importance of the 911 recording and the telecommunicator's role as a Fresh Complaint Witness.
2. Describe appropriate professional appearance and demeanor when testifying in court.
3. Prepare for testimony by reviewing reports, CAD notes, recordings, and participating in a pre-trial conference.
4. Apply the Principles of Effective Testimony, including honesty, accuracy, composure, and factual communication.
5. Distinguish among direct examination, cross examination, redirect examination, and rebuttal and respond appropriately to defense counsel tactics.

Content/Activities

- Court Testimony and the Telecommunicator
- Professional Courtroom Appearance and Demeanor
- Preparing for Court Testimony
- Principles of Effective Testimony
- Honesty, Accuracy, and Credibility
- Direct, Cross, Redirect, and Rebuttal Examination
- Defense Counsel Tactics and Effective Responses
- Video: *Effective Courtroom Testimony* and Brainteaser

Module 7: Domestic Violence and 911 Liability

This module examines liability associated with domestic violence call handling and the importance of meeting the appropriate Standard of Care. Learners explore liability related to inappropriate or delayed response, failure to respond, improper handling of protective-order violations, abandoned 911 calls, insufficient caller protection, and inadequate policies or training. The module concludes with practical methods for reducing individual and agency liability.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Identify common sources of telecommunicator and agency liability in domestic violence incidents.
2. Explain how inappropriate, delayed, or absent response can increase liability exposure.
3. Describe liability concerns associated with protective-order violations and abandoned 911 calls.
4. Explain the importance of providing a reasonable Standard of Care to domestic violence callers and victims.
5. Identify policies, training practices, procedures, and call-handling techniques that can reduce liability.

Content/Activities

- Domestic Violence and 911 Liability
- Standard of Care and Appropriate Response
- Liability from Delayed, Wrong, or No Response
- Restraining and Protective Order Violations
- 911 Abandoned Calls and Caller Safety
- Audio: *Child Caller 911 Hang-Up*
- Methods to Reduce Liability
- Brainteasers

Course Completion Criteria

To successfully complete this course and earn continuing education hours, learners must achieve a minimum score of 75%. The quiz must be completed within one hour.

- CE hours awarded: 3
- Certificate duration: 12 Months

Technical Requirements

- Desktop, laptop, or mobile device
- Speakers or headphones
- High-speed Internet access
- A current web browser