Realistic De-escalation
Presented by the Force Science® Institute

For dates and locations, visit: www.forcescience.org or call: (312) 690-6216

Course Description

This unique and timely new program, offered exclusively by the Force Science® Institute, thoroughly dissects the complex concept of “de-escalation” and the many elements involved in determining its feasibility and effectiveness in a variety of encounters. This de-escalation course is not just a rehashed or relabeled communication course. From our analysis of de-escalation, we have determined it can involve the full integration of all the skills and tools an officer can bring to the situation. The class will teach and illustrate the full integration of tactical and communication skills in real scenarios experienced and successfully managed by Force Science® staff.

The goal of this Force Science® course is to enhance de-escalation efforts with the help of science – both in the field and in training – while also critically applying an understanding of human factors and performance research to most effectively address challenging situations with individuals in the midst of a crisis. This information is also critical for investigators and administrators when evaluating the feasibility of employing de-escalation techniques in a pressurized, rapidly unfolding encounter.

The course—crucial for virtually all law enforcement professionals, from street officers and field supervisors to investigators, attorneys and administrators—mutes the rhetoric prevalent in today’s emotionally charged atmosphere and unbiasedly focuses on the proven scientific realities surrounding human behavior as they apply to efforts to de-escalate a potentially confrontational encounter.

The information presented in this course is expertly designed to be integrated into an agency’s pre-encounter training curriculum, actively utilized in unfolding field encounters and applied during investigations of both force and non-force encounters.

Course Content – The course is designed in all aspects to be “street relevant”. The officer will be taught how to enhance and utilize their current skill sets to a variety of unique and difficult situations, particularly with individuals in the middle of a crisis.

The officer will see videos recorded by Force Science® of individuals who had encounters with law enforcement while in the middle of a serious psychological crisis.
They will be speaking about what officers did or didn’t do to effectively assist or resolve their situation.

As part of the course, students will be introduced to the critical elements of the new *Force Science* “Response-ability Zone” and the “7 T’s De-escalation Evaluation Model,” designed to help create response options in pressurized encounters, better facilitate non-forceful resolutions and enhance investigators’ ability to evaluate the feasibility of de-escalation options in an encounter.

**Students will also learn to:**

- Quickly evaluate a variety of situations to determine whether de-escalation efforts are reasonable to consider, tactically practical and likely to be successful;

- Dramatically enhance de-escalation efforts by strategically combining knowledge of human factors research findings and the realities of subject behavior and officer performance in high-stress law enforcement encounters with negotiative psychology techniques;

- Employ 10 types of questions strategically designed to cognitively engage individuals in crisis and increase the likelihood of a non-forceful resolution;

- Better ensure that officers’ approach and control strategies maximize response options while minimizing the potential for unnecessary emotional and/or physical escalation;

- Overcome resistance by using “strip phrases” and avoid or defuse confrontation by using solid paraverbals;

- Support and expand departmental de-escalation training programs;

- Assist investigators and others evaluating force events in determining the situational and behavioral factors that need to be considered when analyzing whether de-escalation efforts would have been feasible and potentially effective;

- Ensure that the expectations of officers tasked with navigating pressurized encounters are fair and reasonable based on the scientifically proven realities of psychology, human behavior and human performance research.

- Help community members and the media better understand what *realistic* de-escalation entails and the challenges that various individuals can bring to bear that can inhibit, if not completely prohibit, an officer’s ability to safely de-escalate.

**Course Objectives:**

- Increase understanding of “traditional” models of de-escalation versus the *Force Science*® concept of *realistic* de-escalation.

- Explain why an awareness of an individual’s mental health diagnosis may have limited value on the street, given that illnesses can manifest themselves differently in that setting due to multiple uncontrollable influences.
• Help attendees learn to efficiently and effectively build rapport in an effort to persuade or influence individuals in pressurized street encounters.

• Assist law enforcement personnel in promptly evaluating the nature of various encounters and determining the “tools” they may need based on their ability to establish contact.

• Further, utilizing this assessment, helping police personnel understand the value of goal-driven behavior and how establishing their flexible goals in a situation aids in resolution.

• Introduce the concept of “contaminated thinking” and explain how that can dramatically impact an officer’s ability to successfully interact with a person influenced by this type of thinking.

• Address “high subject emotionality” and how that can negatively impact an individual’s thoughts and behavior.

• Address how officers’ personal experiences and perceptions may impacts their emotions and behaviors.

• Explain “emotional regulation” and its role in the realistic de-escalation process and offer suggestions to trainers that may help officers increase their emotional control skills through specific training strategies.

• Help police personnel understand “goal-directed behavior” and how to incorporate, if possible, the goals of an individual into an officer’s de-escalation strategy.

Presentation Format

2/3 of the class will be a lecture, slide, video presentation format. Approximately 1/3 will be clinical presentations of scenarios that the class will engage and analyze in Socratic fashion and provide rationale for their recommendations at various critical decision points. These scenarios will fully utilize all the officer’s skills and tools, starting with the information they acquire from dispatch and their responses to that in facilitating tactical and verbal de-escalation. The scenarios will be directed toward an ultimate resolution in some fashion.

The Force Science® Realistic De-Escalation Course is a two-day program. The class will start at 8:30 a.m. each day and end at 5:00 p.m. There will be an hour and 15-minute lunch break and periodic coffee breaks throughout the day.

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