

**San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office – Presenter # 2440**  
**Strategic Communications # 29540**  
**POST Perishable Skills Program (PSP)**  
**2- hour Course**  
**Expanded Course Outline**

**COURSE GOAL:**

The course will provide the student with the minimum topics of Strategic Communications required in the POST perishable Skills Training Program. The intent of the course is to improve the student's ability to generate voluntary compliance through the art of persuasion and utilizing the tools of interpersonal and tactical communication. The course consists of a hands on/practical strategic communications training for in-service personnel.

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

**Minimum Topics/Exercises:**

- a. Officer safety
- b. Escalation versus de-escalation
- c. Communication elements
- d. Listening skills
- e. Questioning techniques
- f. Persuasion
- g. People with disabilities
- h. Team communication during a critical incident
- i. Class exercises/Student evaluation/Testing

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The student will:

1. Demonstrate the basic components of communication skills and techniques.
2. Demonstrate the importance of listening and persuasion skills as they relate to effective strategic communication.
3. Demonstrate the skills needed to communicate effectively.
4. Demonstrate a minimum standard of strategic communication skills with every technique and exercise, to include:
  - A. Officer safety
  - B. Listening/persuasion
  - C. Judgement and decision making
  - D. De-escalation, verbal commands
  - E. Effectiveness under stress conditions

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**Minimum standards of performance shall be tested by an instructor observing the students during their performance of each technique and exercise. If the student does not meet minimum standards, as established by the presenter, remediation will be provided until the standard is met.**

**EXPANDED COURSE OUTLINE**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Course Overview

1. Instructor introductions
2. Student introductions

B. Course Goals and Objectives

1. Safety
2. Enhanced professionalism
3. Decrease in complaints
4. Decrease in liability
5. Lessen personal stress

II. OFFICER SAFETY

**IV (a)**

A. Control the Environment

1. Tactical pause
2. Slow down
3. Gather information
4. Develop a plan
5. Time + Distance = Options

B. Make Sound Decisions

1. What's important right now?
2. Set priorities
3. Think through your choices

III. UNDERSTANDING ESCALATION VERSUS DE-ESCALATION IS AFFECTED BY COMMUNICATING STRATEGIES

**IV (b)**

A. Professionalism

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1. Stay in control of your emotions and keep your ego in check
  - a. The more ego is involved, the more difficult the situation
  - b. The less ego, the more influence
2. Appropriate language
  - a. What you say
  - b. How you say it
  - c. How you communicate

**B. How you Treat Others**

1. Golden rule- treat others the way you want to be treated
2. Platinum rule- treat others the way they want to be treated

**C. Four Tenets of Procedural Justice**

1. Voice
2. Neutrality
3. Respectful treatment
4. Trustworthiness

**IV. COMMUNICATION ELEMENT**

**IV (c, d, e)**

**A. Phases of Communication**

1. Approach- Impact of physicality
2. Greeting- Initiating the conversation
3. Engagement- Strategies to promote communication
4. Adaptation- Being flexible
5. Repair- Re-establishing rapport
6. Incident closure- How we end a contact today could influence a future contact

**B. Message Delivery**

1. Content
2. Tone/voice
3. Non-verbal

**C. Active Listening**

1. Affirmations
2. Open ended questions
3. Mirroring
4. Paraphrasing
5. Avoiding “you” messages
6. Effective pauses

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7. Listen to understand not to respond

**D. Empathy**

1. Empathy vs. Sympathy

- a. Empathy- The ability to understand and share the feelings of another
- b. Sympathy- Feelings of sorrow and pity for someone else's misfortune

2. Establish Rapport

**E. Questioning Techniques**

- 1. Intentional closed questions
- 2. Open ended questions
- 3. Question types
  - a. Fact finding
  - b. Leading
  - c. Option seeking

**F. Persuasion**

**IV (f)**

- 1. Rational appeal
- 2. Personal appeal
- 3. Ethical appeal

**V. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**IV (g)**

A. Individuals with physical, mental health, developmental, or intellectual disabilities may have difficulty communicating, understanding, or complying with commands from peace officers.

- 1. State law
- 2. Agency policy

B. Recognize appropriate methods of communication with people experiencing:

- 1. Mental illness
- 2. Substance use disorders
- 3. Intellectual disabilities
- 4. Physical disabilities
- 5. Emotional distress

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C. Potential Strategies

1. Pace
2. Tone/voice
3. Reduce distractions
4. Content
5. Non-verbal

D. Special Relationships/Community Caretaking

1. State law
2. Agency policy

VI. TEAM COMMUNICATION DURING A CRITICAL INCIDENT **IV(h)**

A. Coordinated Effort

1. Planned response (when feasible)
2. One voice
  - a. Single point of contact with subject(s)
  - b. Single point of contact with dispatch
3. Force options
4. Continuous assessment

B. Potential Resources

1. Mental health resources
2. Community resources

C. Debrief

1. Effective
2. Ineffective

VII. CLASS EXERCISES/STUDENT EVALUATION **IV (i)**

A. Practice of communication skills via active process

1. Participation in roleplay scenarios
2. Observation of role play scenarios
3. Debrief of role play scenarios

B. Evaluation of communication skill via demonstration

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1. Evaluated role play scenarios
2. Feedback and debrief from instructors