Lessons Learned in Response and Recovery:
Northern Illinois University

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Lieutenant Darren Mitchell serves as Director of the Office of Emergency Management and Planning for the Northern Illinois University (NIU) Department of Police and Public Safety. His office is responsible for the University’s Emergency Operations Plan, Public Health Pandemic Plan, critical incident management, and all related training and exercises. He supervises the Special Investigations Unit, Traffic Unit, K-9 Unit, 911 Telecommunications Center, Community Policing SAFE Program, and the undercover CAMPUS Program. Lieutenant Mitchell also serves as a Commander for the Department’s SWAT team, and he is a member of the State of Illinois’ Type 3 Critical Incident Management Team.

Lieutenant Mitchell is a graduate of Northwestern University’s School of Police Staff and Command as well as its Executive Management and Executive Decision Making Programs. He has attended the National Crime Prevention Institute at the University of Louisville and is certified as a Hazardous Materials Technician and Emergency Medical Technician. He also holds a master's degree from NIU. Lieutenant Mitchell serves on numerous boards and committees including serving as a member of the Illinois Governor’s Task Force on Campus Security and Safety. Lieutenant Mitchell has received numerous accolades during his years of service in law enforcement including the Medal of Valor and the Life Saving Award. He is also a recipient of Northwestern University’s Public Safety Executive Leadership Award. He is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, and the DeKalb County Law Enforcement Administrators Association. In addition, Lieutenant Mitchell is a registered subject-matter expert for the U.S. Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center.
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Presenter:
Lt. Darren Mitchell
NIU Police and Public Safety
Lt. Darren Mitchell

- Director, Office of Emergency Management & Planning
- Graduate, Northwestern University’s School of Police Staff & Command, Executive Management, and Executive Decision Making Programs
- Member, Illinois Governor’s Task Force on Campus Security
- Member, Illinois Type 3 Critical Incident Management Team
- Founding Member, NIU Threat Assessment Team
- Commander, SWAT Team
- Licensed EMT
• Overview of campus Shooting
• NIU Police Philosophy
• Crisis Planning
• Incident Command/Unified Command
• Shooting Investigation
• Shooter/Victims
• Legal Issues
• 2nd Largest University in IL
• 70 Miles West of Chicago
• Student Population: 25,000
• Faculty/Staff: 9,000
• 756 Acres
• 101 Buildings
NIU Police and Public Safety

• 62 Police Officers
• 18 Contract Security
• 8 Telecommunicators
• 9 Security Guards
• 6 Civilian Employees
• 7 Community Safety Centers
• Late Night Ride Service
• Residence Hall Officer Program
Department Philosophy

• Prevention vs. Reaction

• Obtain Voluntary Compliance Through the Least Restrictive Means Necessary

• Build Trusting Relationships

• Integrated Community Policing Model
Department Philosophy

Every Officer is Involved in Community Policing

Officers are Assigned Specific Areas of Responsibility

• Community Safety Centers In Key Locations
• Officers are accessible and approachable
Department Philosophy

• Officers Engage the Community

  ➤ Through Foot Patrol
  ➤ Formal and Informal Community Meetings
  ➤ Educational Programming
  ➤ Collaborative Problem Solving
Cycle of Crisis Planning

Mitigation & Prevention

Preparedness

Recovery

Response

*The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools U.S. Department of Education (January 2007)
The Three Ships to Crisis Management

LEADERSHIP
✓ Establish Goals and Objectives
✓ Make Sound and Timely Decisions
✓ Communicate Effectively

FOLLOWERSHIP
✓ Disciplined and Well Trained
✓ “Stay in your lane!”

RELATIONSHIP
✓ Establish Trusting and Open Relationships with the Community
✓ Build Familiarity and Trust with Other Agencies
✓ Train with Other Agencies Before an Incident Occurs
Our Active Shooter Plan:

- Develop a comprehensive Active Shooter policy.

- Train All officers in the response to Active Shooters – Include realistic scenarios

- Remember, an immediate response is critically important - The first officer on the scene goes in!

- Equip all squad cars with ballistic shields and emergency medical trauma bags!

- Train, train and train some more....
Events Leading Up to the Incident

- **September 2007** – President Peters establishes a committee to review the V-Tech report.

- **October 2007** – Department conducts a multi-jurisdictional Mass Casualty Exercise.

- **October 2007** – Test Emergency Notification System

- **December 2007** – Department investigates threats of an active shooting, prompting a university closure.

- **February 7, 2008** – Department investigates threatening graffiti left in a bathroom stall.
The Primary Response

- 911 Callers Begin Reporting the Shooting 3:06 PM
- Officers Observe Dispersion of Students 3:06 PM
- 13 NIU Police Officers Respond from Various Locations
- First Officer Enters Cole Hall at 3:08 PM
- Entry of Collins Auditorium 3:09 PM
- Triage and Treatment 3:10 PM
- Collins Auditorium Secured 3:12 PM
- Cole Hall Declared Safe 3:15 PM
- Public Affairs First Alert 3:20 PM
Fire/EMS Staging – Initiated at 3:08 PM
Treatment and Transport

• First Paramedics Enter Cole Hall at 3:15 PM

• First Transport from Scene 3:26 PM

• DeKalb Fire Department with the Assistance of 19 Mutual Aid Agencies

• Departments Transport 18 Victims from the 5 Campus Locations to Kishwaukee Community Hospital
Treatment and Transport

- Last Victim Transported at 4:54 PM
- 2 of the 18 Transported Died at the Hospital
- 6 Victims Transported by Helicopter from KCH to 4 different Hospitals
- 4 People Pronounced Dead at the Scene, Including the Shooter
Lessons Learned

1. Beware of Dispersion

• Victims will flee the scene if they can.

• Don’t just assume victims were injured in the location they are found.

• Don’t report a “second shooter” unless you have clear evidence of one.

• Telecommunicators must ask clarifying questions and avoid the assumption that callers were injured at their present location.
Incident Command and Staging of Police Resources

- **Establish Mobile Command Post**
- **Establish Reception Point**
  - Identify personnel
  - Type of Resources
  - Keep Records
- **Establish Staging Area**
  - Provide appropriate briefing
  - Make assignments
  - Standby until needed
Lessons Learned

2. Select primary, secondary and tertiary staging areas now, before you have an incident on your campus.
Resource Allocation

- Perimeter Support
- Security Sweeps
- Preliminary Investigations and Witness Interviews
- Door to Door Sweeps of Nearby Buildings
- Tactical Response Team
Investigation

- Investigative Command
  - NIU Police

- Crime Scene Processing
  - FBI and ISP

- Witness Interviews
  - ISP

- Firearms Tracing
  - ATF

- Victim Interviews
  - ATF

- Suspect Background
  - DeKalb MCS

- Behavioral Science
  - FBI
1. Train All Officers in the response to an Active Shooter or Violent Intruder.

• You cannot predict when or where an active shooter will strike.

• You cannot wait for S.W.A.T.
2. The First Officer on the Scene Goes In.

- The people inside are not armed or protected by body armor.
- Seconds count.
Lessons Confirmed

You don’t have the time to set up a perimeter, stage an entry team, formulate an entry plan and then enter.

- In an instant many more people can be hurt or lose their lives.

- Forces the suspect to take cover, flee, engage the officer or take his own life.
3. **Train with what you carry.**

- **That means the tools you carry with you the vast majority of the time.**
- **You will not always have immediate access to long guns or ballistic shields.**
- **You don’t have the time to go back for the things you wish you had.**
4. If all of your police officers are Emergency Medical Technicians:

- **Every Officer responding to the incident is a tactical EMT**

- **Officers are able to transition from law enforcement to emergency medical treatment and triage.**

- **Provides for immediate emergency medical treatment to injured until other EMS professionals arrive.**
5. Train with other area responders before an incident occurs.

- The development and use of IAPs for planned events prepared us for use of IAPs in an actual crisis.

- Mock exercises helped identify weakness in our plans and allow us to make improvements before a crisis occurred.

- Training develops trust and enhances communication.
6. **Staging of responders is critically important.**

- **Communicate your staging and reception protocols to local agencies:**
  - **If you don’t everyone will respond directly to the scene of the incident.**
  - **Uncoordinated police response to the scene has the ability to cause confusion.**
7. Maximizing resource effectiveness is critically important.

- Direct the agencies in your area to only send the people and resources you ask for.

- Assign officers who report to the staging area specific duties and direct them to **STAY IN THEIR LANES**.
Lessons Confirmed

• Every responder coming to assist must be staged upon their arrival, unless the officer in command at the scene directs otherwise.

• Officers cannot abandon their given assignment unless redirected by someone in a position of authority.
Federal Mandates

• NIMS requires all levels of government to:
  – Prepare for and use the Incident Command System (ICS) model for all domestic incidents
  – Adopt ICS as a condition for federal preparedness funding and other grants

• Clery Act
  – Effective Oct. 1, 2010, schools will be required to have an official emergency plan written and a summary of that plan disclosed in their annual security report
Reports/Articles

- Campus Attacks: Targeted violence affecting institutions of higher education (U.S. Secret Service, April 2010)
- NIU Shootings (USFA, August 2009)
- Portrait of the school shooter as a young man (Esquire, August 2008)
- Campus Security Task Force Report to Illinois Governor (April 2008)
Recovery Phase

- New state law, August 2008
- Hired 15 additional police officers
- Hired 2 additional staff for EMP Office
- Undercover campus program
- Threat assessment teams created
- Enhanced emergency alerting system
- New Office of Support & Advocacy
- Memorial to slain students
The Shooter

Steven Kazmierczak

- 27 year-old Grad student at U of I
- Earned 2 undergrad degrees at NIU
- Well respected as a student, teaching assistant, and colleague
- Poor mental health history prior to coming to NIU in August 2002
- No records of contact with Police or Judicial Affairs
- No warning signs before shooting
“An act of violence does not define us.”

NIU President John Peters
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Questions?
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