

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS IN THE WORKPLACE

SESSION 2: HOW DOES THIS ACTUALLY WORK?



REDHAWK
FIREARM TRAINING

Professional Endorsements for Samuel Middlebrook

“Samuel Middlebrook is an excellent teacher, a quality man with high standards who inspires confidence.”

Sheriff Brian Winter, Yakima County, Washington

“Samuel Middlebrook is one of the most inspirational, empowering, and motivating instructors I have ever worked with.”

Michael Green, United States Army “Green Beret” Special Forces

“Samuel Middlebrook is a phenomenal teacher. He knows what is most important and how to break it down to the most basic, easy to understand level. He is a great instructor, and even better man.”

Sam Jeffrey, Director of Harding University’s Criminal Justice Program and Former CIA Special Agent

“I’ve never met a man I trust more than Samuel Middlebrook. He’s a naturally gifted teacher and possesses an uncanny ability to speak to people in the way they can understand. I’m proud to call him a friend and mentor.”

Lieutenant Luke Brandon, Washington State Patrol

“I’ve trained with very few instructors as positive, encouraging, and capable as Samuel Middlebrook. The only word that comes to mind is ‘phenomenal’.”

E.J. Williamson, Former Task Commander, United States Naval Special Warfare Command

1. What does Situational Awareness feel like in the real moment of a “security event”?

- a. My brain will use my five senses to perceive information.
- b. The striatum of my brain will begin to compile this information.
 - i. Motivation will be driven by emotion. (Ventral system)
 - ii. Adaptive Decisions will be made quickly, driven by emotion. (Dorsomedial system)
 - iii. Routine Actions will be my mode of operation, which is why mentally and sometimes physically rehearsing these things is mandatory for my safety during a “security event”. (Dorsolateral system)
 - iv. The Striatum processes of my brain work like a “Mental Etch-A-Sketch”. Mental pictures are roughly drawn without great detail but they can be erased quickly if I give in to the stress of the situation.

2. Now that I understand Situational Awareness, what practical steps can I take for my safety?

- a. Learning to DE-ESCALATE emotionally charged scenarios. Knowing that my “OODA Loop” can help shift the “OODA Loop” happening in another person.
 - i. *Be empathic and non-judgmental.* I will do all that I can to understand the other person’s perspective or situation, and speak to my understanding of it.
 - ii. *Respect personal space.* I will not encroach or insert myself unless I deem it essential.
 - iii. *Use nonthreatening non-verbals.* My body language communicates faster than my words. I will not escalate my posture.
 - iv. *Avoid over-reacting.* My tone, pace, and volume of speech will not out-pace the other persons.
 - v. *Focus on feelings.* My empathy will communicate my attempts to understand how the other person feels, regardless of whether or not they are factual to me.
 - vi. *Delay challenging questions.* Answers such as “I can try to find out for you”, “That’s not my decision, but I can try to help you through this process” can help to form a perceived bond between the escalated person and yourself.
 - vii. *Set limits.* I will know what I can and cannot do, and stick to those things.
 - viii. *Choose wisely what I insist upon.* I can choose to not take things personally.
 - ix. *Allow space and time for reflection.* I can help control the pace of the conversation by not demanding instant answers or giving instant verbal answers.
 - x. *Allow time for decisions.* I will allow the other person to make choices, even if they are not what I would decide in that moment.

b. Creating “real-time cheat sheets” to help my brain stay engaged under stress.

i. Knowing the entrances and exists of my facility wherever I am.

ii. Clearly marking the interior and exterior exits in my facility.

Example 1: Street names and compass markers

Example 2: “The person is moving toward the east side of our facility on the second floor”

Example 3: “The person ran out the door heading north on Wilson street”

iii. When co-workers are present, having a predetermined signal that everyone knows, understands, and rehearses in order to let others know that a potential “security event” is occurring.

iv. I am able to describe in detail both the threat **AND** the person making it. HEAD to TOE, in that order, as our eyes look high under stress.

- Hats
- Glasses
- Unique identifiers such as tattoos, scars, etc...
- Clothing
- Eye color
- Physical build

v. Creating “911 enablers” next to each phone to mitigate “911 Fog”.

Example 1: “6-9-0-1 Mountain View Road”

Example 2: “The buildings are marked on the corners, and I am in Building 3, on the second floor”

Example 3: “”

Example 4: “There are several employees working in the youth building right now”

What most 911 Dispatchers will ask you in order:

- Type of situation
- Location of situation
- Description of individuals

- I will help the Situational Awareness of a 911 Dispatcher by not forcing them to listen for or draw out clues to why I’m calling for assistance.

All 911 Dispatch workers are trained to either deploy aid or listen further. Help them deploy aid FAST.

c. Being aware of my workplace from a perspective of Situational Awareness

- i. I know where fire extinguishers are, not only for fire, but for self-protection.
- ii. I keep my cell phone on me at all times along with any other means of communication with my teammates (where applicable).
- iii. I know the difference between **concealment** and **cover** in my workplace.
- iv. I know that distance is my friend, and I spend time on a regular basis rehearsing creating distance in my mind.

3. Deciding once-and-for-all that I am responsible for my personal safety.

a. I do not “have to” insert myself into situations that are not physically threatening to me.

- i. I do not “have to” approach an individual who is displaying observable, describable behavior that is threatening.
- ii. I do not “have to” attempt to disrupt a physical assault.
- iii. I do not “have to” rescue anyone from themselves.
- iv. I do not “have to” remain in close proximity to a “security event” in order to impact the outcome of it.

b. I am empowered through Situational Awareness to protect myself.

- i. I know what I am willing to do to keep myself safe.
- ii. I know how to do whatever it is I am willing to do to keep myself safe.
- iii. I remain prepared at a moment’s notice to actually do what I am willing to do.
- iv. I make mental notes of my surroundings all the time.
- v. I am aware of how my body naturally responds to stress, and I am empowered to mitigate it through Situational Awareness techniques.
- vi. I am aware that I can de-escalate aggressive conversations.
- vii. I am willing to be in charge of my emotions.
- viii. I am prepared to tactically assist 911 emergency personnel with my words.
- ix. I understand that I might escalate an observable situation by inserting myself into it. Distance is my friend, and can keep me safe so that I can help get professional emergency assistance more quickly. I will only insert myself if I see no other way to move forward.