

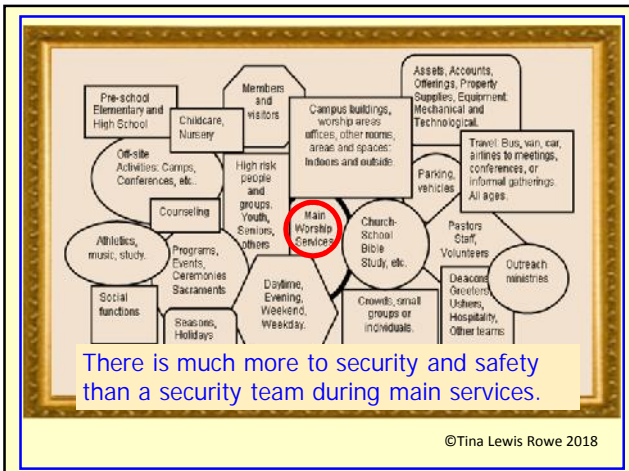


**Developing, training and maintaining an effective security team in a place of worship, is an ongoing process.**

*This PDF of some of the slides from my seminar is not comprehensive, but it provides a good overview of issues for security teams. Please use the information in your own material, as you wish. I would appreciate attribution, if that is possible.*

The information can also be adapted for congregational or individual training.

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A whole-church program will increase preparedness.

Inspection  
Protection  
Prevention  
Detection  
Readiness for Action

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### To increase readiness:

- Stay alert in a reasonable way. Report security and safety concerns and potentials.
- Develop a team of effective individuals, ready for a coordinated response. (Training talk-throughs, walk-throughs, real-time practice.)
- Conduct ongoing inspections and follow-up. (Reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen methods for prevention, detection and protection.)

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**Make everyone, of all ages, a partner in the security and safety program.**

Don't restrict all of the information and training to security team members.

Help people learn ways to help themselves in any kind of emergency.

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### Whole-Church Program Components

#### 1. A Safety and Security Coordinating Group

- \* Security Team
- \* Safety Team or Medical Team
- \* Security Liaisons

#### 2. Security and Safety Inspections

#### 3. Procedures, Plans and Checklists

#### 4. A Manual or Folder of Information.

#### 5. Whole-Church Involvement:

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**Security Team**

May be a mix of participants.

- \*Police officers, military, firefighters, (current or retired).
- \***Or, may be any team of alert, aware adults who are ready to respond and to get and give assistance.**
- \*Under the guidance of church leadership regarding activities, apparel, overall approach, etc.

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**Research legal requirements, exceptions and limitations for church security teams**

- State laws and city/county ordinances (Weapons, holding someone for the police, trespassing laws, restraining orders, etc.)
- Your church insurance company's policies
- Seek advice from an attorney or from city or county attorneys.

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**Be clear and specific about participation, no matter who are members of the Team:**

1. Background investigation.
2. Attitudes and approaches to situations.
3. Scheduling and attendance.
4. Attire, grooming and overall demeanor.
5. Responsibilities and tasks (and limitations and prohibitions.)
6. Weapons and non-lethal items—training and qualification activities.

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- Don't set a number, so there are no "vacancies" to fill. Invite members, after discussion and careful consideration.
- Develop a few tasks to which you can assign a volunteer who isn't optimal for a protective role.
- Rotate an Intelligence Officer role to stay aware of trends and events.
- Have a leadership role in keeping a whole-church focus.

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No matter what a volunteer's background or interest in being on the team, have the courage to not assign, to reassign or to replace anyone who is not appropriate for the position:

1. Medical, physical, cognitive, psychological or emotional issues. (Pre-existing or developing.)
2. Being charged with a crime, especially anything involving violence.
3. Showing evidence of lack of judgment.
4. Indications of not wanting to follow guidelines or resenting oversight.

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### Main Service Tasks

- Focus on the worship leader and platform team/choir/musicians.
- Focus on the congregation.
- Focus on the lobby and exterior.
- Patrolling through the building, to check entry points, restrooms, children's areas, etc.
- Ready to evaluate situations quickly and either call 911 or handle on-site.
- Assistance in any kind of emergency.

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### Expand the Role of the Security Team

A leadership role in whole-church efforts: support, encourage and train.

Research events and situations and use as scenarios for discussion and training.

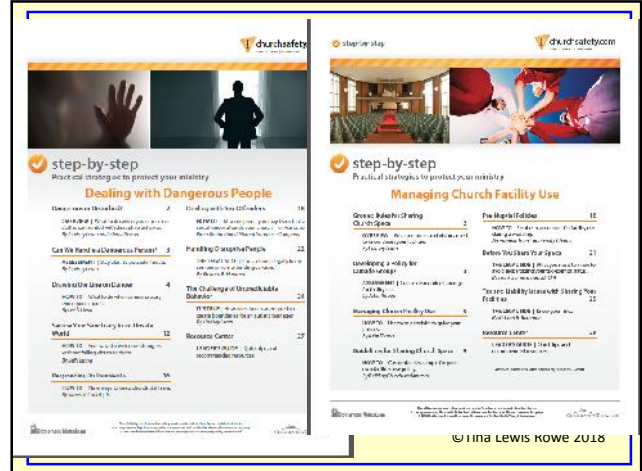
Training, briefings, consulting for pastors, staff and members. Be an active resource for security, on-site and off-site.

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## The Security and Safety Committee and Teams can be consultants for pastors and others.

Counseling program protocols  
 Background investigation resources  
 Liaison with insurance company  
 Networking with other churches  
 Research legal issues  
[www.churchlawandtax.com](http://www.churchlawandtax.com)

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### Briefings:

Conferences and camps  
 Travel--domestic and foreign  
 Mission trips  
 Food pantry staff, money handling,  
 vehicle safety, personal safety

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## Before people leave.....

### Vehicle safety

Driving time, texting/talking, seat belts,  
 driver distractions, break locations, etc.

Review rules for the event, local laws,  
 what to do in emergencies, etc.

Adults with youth: What to be alert  
 about. Requirements and restrictions.

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Weapons?

**Legality for the individuals involved.**

**Leadership preferences.**

**Training/Capabilities/Judgment.**

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### **Team Training with Weapons**

1. Weapons safety and requirements.
2. Close quarters, moving, behind barricades.
3. Site-specific tactics.
4. Shoot-Don't Shoot Scenarios.
5. Less than lethal options.
6. Nighttime practice, to simulate darkened conditions or times when vision might be reduced.

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### **Other important training:**

- Reducing (de-escalating)conflict.
- Recognizing and responding to mental health and emotional issues. (And advising leadership about concerns and problems related to members and guests.)
- Recognizing and responding to indicators of domestic violence, child or elder abuse, sex crimes and improprieties.
- Methods and plans for handling a variety of disruptions
- Recognizing explosives
- Recognizing indicators of concealed weapons

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### **Three Key Training Reminders**

1. **Keep the training appropriately serious.** Excessive joking and antics can cause misunderstandings, accidents, wasted time and lack of effective results.
2. **Do not stage incidents to see how people react.** Those can easily create panic and injuries and cause people to not take real incidents seriously.
3. **Document all training.** Take photos and notes. Retain the roster, handout material and other documentation in a computer file.

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Written and practiced  
response plans for:

1. Weather and natural emergencies.
2. Fire/smoke and alarms, explosions and bomb threats.
3. Medical emergency/injury/illness, (and individual-specific plans.)
4. Known assailant(s) with weapons, sound of gunfire, sound of disturbance.
5. Other emergencies, pertinent to specific individuals, specific groups, the building or the locale.

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Also develop a duress word or code words, known by the team, leaders, greeters, ushers and others.

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**Teachers/Volunteers/Staff  
can be assisted in developing plans  
for their specific spaces**



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Plans are easier to develop  
than most people think.

1. Use a combination of text and numbered lists of actions. Concise but complete.
2. Distribute emergency response plans for specific spaces, processes or programs to everyone who might provide leadership in an emergency.
3. Verbally and visually explain emergency plans, especially to younger teens and children. Review with adults in classrooms, quarterly.

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## Train Everyone

**Every few months:** Brief announcements about fire exits and weather emergencies. Discuss measures taken to assist and protect children. Advise to not try to get to classroom areas.

Remind them they can help by letting leaders know about personal or family concerns that might effect the church.

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Leaders in all programs should practice emergency responses for a variety of emergencies, including in the auditorium.

- Talk-through
- Walk-through
- Real-time, with follow-up review.

The most basic issue: What should they do and say first, then what, then what?

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## Crucial Differences: Research and understand your legal options



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## Disruptions and Disturbances

1. Discuss and plan with church leadership to decide at what level of disruption should the security team intervene.
2. If the disruptive person is unknown to the congregation, 911 should be called. (He/she may have done it other places, may be wanted, may need assistance.
3. Find out ahead of time, what is required for a "trespass" charge and discuss when it might be used.

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### Security Team members should plan general actions each will take.

- \*Who will call 911?**
- \*Who will talk to the problem person?**
- \*If it gets physical who will grab legs, feet, arms, head?**
- \*Who will shield the congregation and/or pastor and platform team?**

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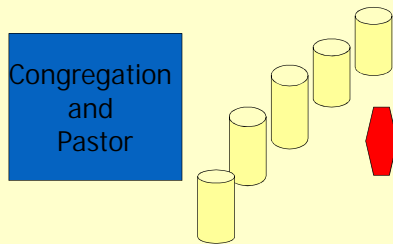
### Two options for what seems to be *non-violent* disturbances and disruptions

- 1. Shield and Guard**
- 2. Divert and Direct**

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### Shield and Guard

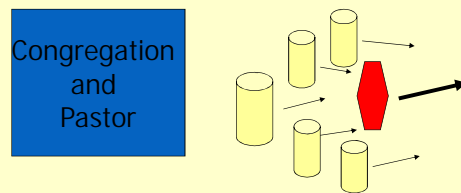
Put a barrier between the threat and the protected person or group.



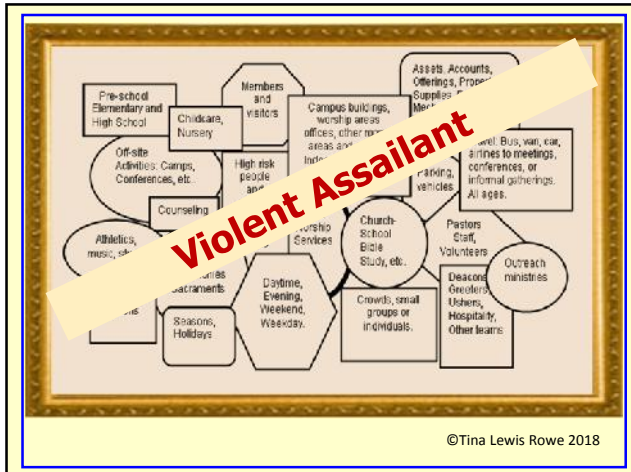
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### Divert and Direct

- \*Distract and delay.**
- \*Guide the disturbance away and outside.**
- \*Leave a way out, in the direction of an exit.**
- \*Do not prevent the person from leaving.**



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- Readiness levels:**
- Security Team Members**
1. Ready to respond, with plans and training for responding defensively and/or aggressively.
  2. Not ready to respond, but quickly can take reasonable steps to protect themselves and others.
  3. Unable to protect themselves. (Age, physical condition, injuries, panic, do not know about protective measures available on-site)
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**What you and the rest of the congregation are up against:**

**The Assailant's Advantage**

This applies to anyone who plans aggression, with or without a weapon.

- Firearm**
- Knife**
- Fists**
- Improvised weapon**
- Sexual assault**
- Home or church invasion**

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**November 5, 2016 :**  
**Eugene O'Donnell**  
**(Professor at John Jay College)**  
**in the New York News:**

“The bad, or deranged, guy chooses the time, place and manner of his attack on the police. The first shots are often fired by the assailant, narrowing the options cops have and leaving their survival to luck or chance.”

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### **The Assailant's Advantage:**

- He knows what he intends to do, when he intends to do it and how he will do it.
- He is prepared for it, with weapons out or close at hand.
- When he attacks, he is the only one who is not surprised and confused.
- He is not deterred or distracted by the results of his attack and he has no one to protect.

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**A reminder:** Almost 100% of police officers killed by the use of a weapon are armed—and many have their weapons drawn.

Having a weapon is only one aspect of reducing an assailant's advantage.

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Working together, in our church and in our community, we can reduce some of the assailant's advantage and keep him from gaining more.

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### **Take advantages away from an assailant**

His ability to catch everyone off-guard.

His ability to arrive and blend in, without being monitored.

His access to vulnerable or targeted areas or people.

His ability to find unmonitored exterior or interior entry points. (No security measures or measures not being used.)

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### Take advantages away from an assailant

His ability to have time on-site to prepare for an attack.

His ability to hide inside or outside and wait.

His ability to act without being detected.

His ability to be anonymous or unidentifiable.

His ability to know the location and capabilities of the security team.

His ability to sustain an attack.

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### All of these involve easily accomplished, on-going security measures.

- His ability to catch everyone off-guard.
- His ability to arrive and blend in, without being monitored.
- His access to vulnerable or targeted areas.
- His ability to find unmonitored or unsecured interior entry points. (No security measures or procedures not being used.)
- His ability to have time on-site to prepare for an attack.
- His ability to hide inside or outside and wait.
- His ability to act without being detected.
- His ability to be anonymous or unidentifiable.
- His ability to know the location and capabilities of the security team.
- His ability to sustain an attack.

**Eliminate or Reduce the Assailant's Advantage**

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Be aware of anything that might indicate the church is being targeted. (Apparent observation, inside or outside; the behaviors of a visitor; public criticism; threats to family members or others.)

- Consider anything that might increase a negative interest in the church. (Events, news stories (even positive ones).

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Monitor the exterior and entrance of the church (Cameras, security team, neighbors.)

Have methods—known by many people—to quickly lock exterior and interior doors or to barricade them.

- Be able to cover windows on interior doors.

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**Purposely add elements that could become barriers and barricades or improvised weapons for the security team and others.**

(Furniture, objects, items, walls, etc.)

Individuals identify what they can lift, turn over, push, throw or hide behind but still be able to see.

- **Individuals and the security team:** Be ready to do something when the assailant is reloading, moving to another location, etc.

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### **Who are the resources who can make a difference?**

- **Family, friends, coworkers of angry, threatening people.** (Legal or civil action; warnings to likely targets, police reports, etc.)

- **Church staff or volunteers who have counseled or conversed with someone who discusses a potentially threatening situation.** (Notifications to security team and others, notifications to law enforcement)

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### **Who are the resources who can make a difference?**

- **Law enforcement resources who hear of concerns that might be linked to the congregation or pastor.**

(Warnings to all area churches, providing identifying information, further investigation, additional protective resources)

- **Anyone who hears rumors, notices something disturbing or thinks there could be an incident.**

(Congregation, security teams, church neighbors, church network.)

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### **Who are the resources who can make a difference?**

- **Security team members (staff or volunteers) (armed or unarmed):**

Monitor parking areas and the area leading to entrances. (Directly or through cameras.)

Observe in the lobby, inside the auditorium and in other locations.

Ready to lock an assailant out, respond to an assailant directly, call for 911 assistance, assist the congregation.

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**Who are the resources who can make a difference?**

- An engaged and alert congregation.
- Individuals and groups who have plans of action for emergencies and threatening situations.

Plans may need to change, but planning increases readiness and response.

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**Variations on the same fundamental concept:**

- Run, Hide, Fight
- Avoid, Deny, Defend
- Escape, Wait, Attack
- Get out, Hide out, Take-out
- Move! Escape or Attack

No specific order of action. May be used by team members too.

*Hide does not necessarily mean cower.*

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**If avoiding or hiding isn't a good option or hasn't been successful:**

Throw chairs, books, purses or other items. Use fire extinguishers, flags, food or anything else. Anything!

The goal: Distract, startle, slow down the attack, harm or neutralize.



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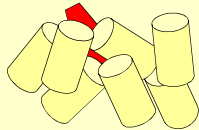
The most obvious option for dealing with a violent person, whether or not they have a weapon:

**Confront, Contain, Control**

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### **Confront, Contain and Control**

Physical force to overpower.  
Using actual or improvised  
weapons or distractions.



This may be the only way  
to stop the attack and save lives.

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If several people decide to  
confront, contain and control,  
spread out if possible, then run in.

Yell and scream:

“Attack, attack, attack!!!!”



Give yourself the advantage of  
startling and confusing  
the assailant.



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### **Don't look like a threat to law enforcement**

When law enforcement arrives, they will  
not be able to tell who is an armed  
assailant and who is a security team  
member—and they will probably not ask.

A general rule: At the first sight of an  
officer, if you have a weapon, put it down  
and put your hands on your head.

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### **Plan for your personal situations:**

1. When you are the formal or informal leader of a group or activity.
2. When you are on your own.
3. When you are with your family.
4. When you may be able to help others.
5. In every church activity in which you participate.

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All the details of an emergency response plan may not work out in a crisis, but it gives you a place to start.

Talking about potential situations and the most effective responses, is never a waste of time—and can unite people in their thinking and planning.

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### You can have a leadership role:

1. Balance concern with reason, steadiness, and optimism.
2. Keep a dual focus: Security *and* Safety.
3. Keep your entire place of worship in mind.
4. Think basic before high tech or high cost. Start with *people solutions*.
5. Think and talk of safety and security as something *you and everyone* can help achieve.

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### Develop the Security Team to be:

- A Leadership Team
- An Information Team
- An Assistance Team
- A Guidance Team
- A Guardian Team
- A Protective Team
- A Defending Team

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