

22. Active Shooter in a hospital setting

Grading format for this component will vary from what is on the Emergency Report Grade Sheet, therefore use the above criteria for your report and outline for this part of your report.

- I. How to respond when an active shooter is in the hospital: Role of the Nurse
 - a. Active shooter-an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area
 - i. Use firearms in most cases
 - ii. Usually planned
 - iii. Typically young males (greater than 90%)
 - iv. No pattern or method for victim selection
 - v. Situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly
 - vi. May involve multiple shooters
 - vii. Typically over within 10-15 minutes
 1. Law enforcement stops shooter
 2. Gun jams
 3. Runs out of bullets
 - b. Common locations
 - i. ED (highest)
 - ii. Outpatient clinic (second highest)
 - iii. Parking lot
 - iv. Patient rooms (i.e. mercy killings)
 - v. ICU
 - c. No single method is guaranteed effective
 - i. Run
 - ii. Hide
 - iii. Fight
 - iv. Choose best option-May use all three
 - v. Consider
 1. Size of hospital
 2. Different departments
 3. Geographical setting
 4. Patient access
 5. Available security
 6. Exits
 7. Location of staff offices
 - d. Run/Evacuate
 - i. Run at the sound of gunshots, take it seriously, trust your instinct
 - ii. Have an escape plan in mind
 1. Practice locating and using exits in areas you frequent
 - iii. Evacuate even if others do not follow
 - iv. Prevent others from entering area where active shooter may be

- v. Help others only if it is safe to do so- It's your personal choice!
- vi. Leave belongings
- vii. Alert authorities when safe to do so
- e. Hide/Barricade
 - i. Hide out of shooter's view
 - ii. Locate room or space with a door, use anything you can to block entry
 - 1. Desks
 - 2. Chairs
 - 3. Beds
 - 4. Stretchers
 - 5. Refrigerators
 - 6. Copiers
 - 7. Bookshelves
 - 8. Cabinets
 - iii. Do more than just hide-just hiding
 - 1. Makes you a sitting duck
 - 2. Easy target
 - 3. Decreases chances of survival
 - iv. Close blinds/windows
 - v. Silence radios, cell phones, and others that may make noise
 - vi. Get ready to fight
 - 1. Grab items to throw to distract or attack shooter
 - vii. Hiding area should not trap you or restrict your options for movement
 - viii. Remain quiet
 - ix. Alert authorities when/if safe to do so
- f. Fight
 - i. Last resort
 - ii. Distract/incapacitate the attacker
 - iii. Throw items
 - 1. If in a group "swarm" attacker- throw items at once
 - iv. Yell
 - v. Act aggressively against attacker
 - vi. Commit to your action!
- g. Nurse
 - i. Duty to care for patients you are responsible for
 - ii. Response depends on mobility of patients and area of hospital affected by shooting
 - iii. Ensure least loss of life as possible
 - iv. Make every reasonable attempt to care for patients
 - v. Must make ethical decision if attempt puts others at risk
 - 1. Considerations
 - a. Allocate resources, special consideration for most vulnerable

- b. Limit harm as best as possible
 - c. Prepare to discontinue care to those that cannot be brought to safety in consideration of those that can
 - d. Consider greater good vs own interest
 - e. Others may choose to remain in danger zone
 - vi. Alert authorities when safe to do so
 - 1. Always assume no one has reported shooting
- II. Law enforcement tactics
- a. Immediately proceeds to area of where gun shots were last heard
 - b. Goal to stop shooter/shooting as quickly as possible
 - c. Will not render first aid
 - i. Rescue team
 - 1. Additional officers and emergency medical personnel
 - 2. Follows initial officers
 - 3. Will treat and remove injured persons
 - 4. My call able-bodied individuals to assist removing injured persons
 - d. First responding may be in teams
 - e. Dress
 - i. normal patrol uniform
 - ii. bullet proof vests, Kevlar helmets, other tactical gear
 - f. May carry riffle, handgun, shotgun
 - g. Law enforcement arrival
 - i. Stay calm, follow officer's instructions
 - ii. Do not carry anything in hands (hands up, fingers apart)
 - iii. Avoid quick movements
 - iv. Avoid pointing and screaming
 - v. Do not stop officers to ask questions, ask for help, or ask for directions
 - vi. Proceed in direction from which officers are entering
 - vii. Do not leave until instructed to do so
- III. Preventing an active shooter situation: warning signs
- a. Display indicators of violent behavior overtime
 - b. Behaviors can be managed if recognized
 - c. Five categories
 - i. Criminal intent
 - ii. Customer/Patient
 - iii. Worker to worker
 - iv. Intimate partner violence or domestic violence
 - v. Ideological violence
 - d. Foster respectful workplace
 - e. Be aware of workplace violence (co-workers, patients, patient's family)
 - i. Increased use of alcohol or illegal drugs
 - ii. Unexplained increase in absenteeism
 - iii. Depression/withdrawal

- iv. Resistance and overreaction to changes in policy or procedures
- v. Repeated violations of company policies
- vi. Increased severe mood swings
- vii. Noticeable unstable, emotional responses
- viii. Explosive outbursts of anger
- ix. Suicidal comments “putting things in order”
- x. Paranoid behavior “everyone is against me”
- xi. Increasingly talks of problems at home
- xii. Talk of severe financial problems
- xiii. Talk of previous incidents of violence
- xiv. Empathy with individuals committing violence
- xv. Increase in unsolicited comments about firearms, other dangerous weapons, and violent crimes

IV. Training of staff for an active shooter (A.L.I.C.E.)

- a. Transforms fear and hopelessness to readiness and preparation
- b. Alert
 - i. First notification of danger
 - ii. Overcoming denial
 - iii. Recognizing signs of danger or receiving notification of danger from others
 - 1. Alerts should be accepted and taken seriously
 - 2. Alerts will help you make survival decisions
 - iv. A speedy response is critical for your survival.
- c. Lockdown
 - i. Only if evacuation is not safe
 - ii. Barricade entry points into your room
 - iii. Use time to prepare to use other strategies
- d. Inform
 - i. Continue to communicate information in real time, if it is safe to do so
 - 1. Communication should be clear, direct, and concise
 - 2. Do not use codes
 - 3. Cannot speak? Leave line open and allow dispatcher to listen
 - ii. Real time information helps to make good survival decisions
 - iii. Know the methods of communication for your organization
- e. Counter
 - i. Last resort, your life is at risk
 - ii. Not the best method
 - iii. Does not ensure safety
 - iv. Disrupts shooter’s ability to make decisions
 - v. Counter ≠ Fighting
 - vi. Purpose is to reduce the shooter’s ability to shoot accurately
 - 1. Noise
 - 2. Movement

- 3. Distance
 - 4. Distraction
 - vii. Provides time to escape
 - f. Evacuate
 - i. Only when safe to do so
 - ii. Use safe techniques and strategic methods (i.e break window from top corner)
 - iii. Avoid escalators and elevators
- V. How to keep patients safe
- a. Evacuate non-impacted areas
 - i. Move patients, staff, and visitors to safe location
 - b. Lockdown area
 - c. Provide supplies, equipment, pharmaceuticals, water, and food to lockdown areas (if relevant i.e. NICU)
 - d. Protect while in lockdown
 - e. Close blinds/windows
 - f. Do not move those wounded
 - g. Facility census, updates, and reporting in coordination with lockdown

References

Beebe Healthcare. (2022). *Active shooter plan*. <https://bbmc.ellucid.com/documents/view/2059>

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. (2023, March 18).

<https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/hospitals-and-healthcare-facilities-action-guide>

Healthcare and Public Health Sector Coordinating Council. (2017). *Active shooter planning and response: Learn how to survive a shooting event in a healthcare setting*.

https://www.fbi.gov/filerepository/active_shooter_planning_and_response_in_a_healthcare_setting.pdf/view

Navigate 360 ALICE. (2023, March 18). <https://www.alicetraining.com>

Schwerin, D., Thurman, J., & Goldstein, S. (2022, February, 15). *Active shooter response*.

StatPearls. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK519067/>

United States Department of Homeland Security. (2008). *Active shooter: How to respond*.

https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf