

**Tami Calais:** [00:00:00] Hello, and welcome to the communication solution podcast. Here at I F I O C we love to talk communication. We love to talk motivational interviewing, and we love talking about improving outcomes for individuals, organizations, and the communities that they serve today. We've got Casey Jackson on the line, John Gilbert, and I'm Tammy.

Welcome to the conversation.

**John Gilbert:** Hello, everyone. We have a very special guest today who I'm looking forward to learn a lot more from, from, uh, it's Steve Wohl. And, uh, we were talking just beforehand here about some of his experience, which he has quite a lot of. Steve, I'm gonna pass it to you, but just from being a hostage commander a SWAT commander, um, over 25 years of experience, there's a lot there to dig into. So if we could just get oriented to your [00:01:00] experience, your role, that would be really helpful to start us off. And then I'm sure from there, we can dive deeper into the, aspects of, of what you've done and how MI might fit with that, how it might not fit with it.

And you, in Casey you can, can get into maybe some back and forth with that for a bit.

**Steve Wohl:** You bet. Thanks, John. Thanks. Uh, for that introduction. Yeah. Like John said, I'm, I'm Steve Wohl. I'm a 25 year veteran of the Spokane police department, coming up on 26 years. So I've, uh, I've had quite a bit of experience.

I've been blessed to work in many different areas and facets of law enforcement. And some of the ones that, I cherish the most have been, both as my time as the hostage commander and SWAT team commander, they work together, which is great. But the, the hostage negotiation piece, um, how we deal with people and that's how I really got to know Casey and MI motivational interviewing and how we can work together and how it would benefit us benefits the people in crisis, which is ultimately our goal. And [00:02:00] so I, just, continued to try to strive to, to bring more education, more experience training to our team, to our department. Um, and so we've really worked well, with I F I O C and with Casey to, to, to bring that experience. So it's been, been great for that. And I just appreciate the opportunity to meet and chat with you guys.

**Casey Jackson:** Steve, you know, I thought this would be fascinating, you know, you and I know each other well. And, and I think one of the things that I think of what struck me about doing a podcast around this is aside from everything, all the chaos in the world, just to bring perspective or a clarity.

Between so much of what law enforcement does because in, in some ways, I mean, , when I hear you say that, um, you know, the work that you've done, you know, in motivational interviewing you really, it's hard for me to think of taking two, more opposite ends of the spectrum. There's law enforcement, very compliance, driven, very, you do this expectation and motivational Interviewing is so [00:03:00] person centered. So it just feels like they are truly opposite ends of the spectrum. And, and we've moved closer and closer in a lot of the work that, you know, at least I've been able to do in law enforcement and, and with, you know, the police departments.

And I think what I want you to start with. Just start with the mindset for you specifically, especially pre motivational interviewing what is a mindset when there is like active shooter? Because I think this is like every single weekend we're seeing this. So, I mean, when you arrive on scene, especially just thinking.

Post Motivational Interviewing/Pre-Motivational Interviewing what's just, when you arrive on scene, what are some of the, just kind of core tenets of what you're thinking about, in terms of safety, in terms of kind of operations.

**Steve Wohl:** Yeah. You know what, and I I'll address the, the thing you brought up, first of being a kind of different ends of the spectrum.

And I think in the fifties and sixties, you know, I think that was more so I think as time has come, we're kind of coming together to where at some point we're gonna cross. And we're seeing that nowadays, where. [00:04:00] The clinicians and the, and the behavioral mental health piece and law enforcement are really working well together.

We're doing a lot of, training together and working together. We're, actually putting clinicians in our cars so that we can bring a service to the people in crisis that we haven't done in the past. That's, vital. And that's where I think we're gonna finally get that cross, where we're, we're working together.

And it's, it's really not different ends of the spectrum. Like you talk about, which is so true, Casey. As far as the second piece. So law enforcement has, traditionally been the group that, that shows up when there's a, uh, a violent encounter or a crisis, and we've gotta control the scene to protect lives.

Our, first mindset is we need to secure the scene and protect and help save any victims that are, that, may have succumbed to injuries or to, or whatever on those violent encounters. And so when we show up. We're not necessarily

thinking of the, of the Motivational Interviewing and behavioral, mental health piece.

We're looking at how can we secure the scene, [00:05:00] make it safe, and then bring in and change gears from, going a hundred miles an hour to make sure it's safe and, neutralize that threat to now helping those that are in need. That's kind of our, our goal initially, as we show up. So you're right in that we, we don't, we aren't thinking originally of.

How we're going to, uh, help the, the victims, the mental health piece, but more, how are we gonna help them by securing the scene, making it safe, and then transitioning to that next step?

**Casey Jackson:** You know, what makes so much sense about that? Steve is as I'm trying to transition, cause I know a lot of behavioral health people listen to the podcast, you know, just a lot of different professions on the behavioral health, healthcare side of it.

For me, when I hear you say that, it reminds me of literally the function of what triage is about. You know, if, if somebody comes into, you know, the ER and they've sought off their leg with a chainsaw, you know, they're not thinking about necessary comfort. They're just trying to stop the bleeding. And it's just such a triage moment.

And I think that when I heard you say that, [00:06:00] I think it helps my brain think of the, the professional worldview I come from as well. That, yeah, that's triage, you know, you it's health and safety first. Like that's literally health and safety before you're thinking about patient comfort. Like it's literally, we need to stop the, the bleeding first and then we can get into, you know, as we triage down from there.

So I that's, my translation that I think is really helpful. Um, when you're looking through that lens, if you would talk a little bit too, because there was a moment when the first. Training. I remember you going through before I even knew you, there was a moment and it's a moment that just stood out in my brain where, um, Jan Takamoto was, you know, we're doing a role play, she's suicidal.

Um, you know, really in that role of doing an excellent job, kind of on the edge of a bridge, and you were with a team who was trying to really were practicing empathy, you know, and it just wasn't happening. Like it just like there's, I, I could just see people fidgety and some of [00:07:00] the officers fidgeting of

just trying to, well, we'll get her off the edge and then we'll do MI we'll get her off the edge and then we'll do MI and it's just like, they couldn't get that.

And then. Something clicked in your brain on I physic, cause I remember squatting down on next to the desk cuz she was on this supposed to be a bridge, you know, she's sitting on the edge of a desk and, and I remember squatting down and kind watching you guys operate and something in your brain shifted, like I literally could watch it.

So would you talk about that moment cuz you and I have talked about that, Jan's talked about that moment. What, what shifted cuz you guys were all kind of fumbling and trying to figure it out when we're doing that mock scenario, what bring people up to speed with kind of what was happening for you in the class and kind of in that moment?

**Steve Wohl:** Yeah. You know, like you talk about, this was a, a classroom setting with a, very professional, person who is putting herself in a, in a vulnerable spot of, of being suicidal. I've unfortunately had to negotiate with and, and try to assist and help people in real life situations, very similarly.

Um, and sometimes they go great and sometimes. You have to find that [00:08:00] person that connects, with the person in crisis to get that. In, in this classroom setting, with Jan, you're exactly right. It's, it's, um, it's tough to replicate a real life situation. Yes. But I think, I think we got as close as we can in a training environment, um, that we prob that I probably have ever been a part of.

And I think what happened is originally it's, I've got a goal of. Working with this with Jan who is suicidal, who's going through some, some, just some family issues. And I'm trying to help her, um, take her off that ledge, right? Both ledges, you know, that she's dealing with the ledge of the, of the bridge and then the ledge that she's dealing with in the, the behavioral mental health piece.

And so I think it I've got in my mind, this is how it should go. And a lot of times law enforcement and. Physicians educators. Everybody has their mindset of, this is my game plan. And it's gonna go just like this, a, B and C, and then it's gonna work out. Yes, yes. And when it goes [00:09:00] from a to C and you miss B and it's like, well, that, that was not a part of the plan, right?

Casey, that that's, that's not supposed to happen like that. I think what happened in that environment was. At, at one point we were, we, I had a group of, I have two had two other negotiators with me and we were, we were talking to Jan and

we were trying to, um, just find that little, I guess, crack that we can get into and, and just relate just as humans relate with her as she's going through a crisis.

Um, We're not going through the crisis. We're not living the crisis that she is or in the real world, what, what the, the people are. And so in this situation, I remember you and I chatting on the side for just a second about, um, just showing that empathy and, and really just, um, being in that scene with her and trying to understand.

Even just a fraction of what she's going through. And what I think clicked for me was just realizing that this wasn't [00:10:00] hostage, negotiator, SWAT commander, Steve wool, doing a, B and C to get her help and to get her there. It was Steve and Jan talking through real life situations to try to try to, to get a, uh, a common ground where I could.

Really empathize and almost feel what she's feeling. I think that that's where Motivational Interviewing really comes into play is once that happens, it was a, um, it was almost like something came over us in that we, uh, I almost felt like afterwards, this was a real life situation where I just wanted to hug her and take her up to the hospital and be with her to walk her through that crisis that she had been in.

And I think when you can connect with somebody. I think that's where MI comes in and helps us is if you can connect and not necessarily, um, you're not having the same emotions and feelings and the visceral, you know, concern that they're having. But if you can connect on [00:11:00] a different level and, and, and almost.

I hate to use the word, win them over, but almost partner with them as you're trying to walk them off that ledge, both the physical ledge and the, and the mental ledge that they're on and make that connection. And that's where MI really helps is making that connection and realizing what we have to do. To make that, that, that, that transition and connect 'em to where we could actually bring them back to us and make them, um, or, you know, help guide them down the path to recovery from, from their crisis.

**Casey Jackson:** You know, Steve one being there and watching that the way articulated was per it just, I mean, it was such a great. Kind of narrative of, of what I watched go down in that moment. Cause I, I think people can think role plays or they can think of mock scenario. And I think that's what it was prior to that moment is three officers in a training who got the material were, displaying,

what they'd learned and somebody that was doing a phenomenal [00:12:00] job embodying the complexity of it and the, the role play.

Of the officer's practice was not lining up with the depth of despair of the person that was suicidal. And I could wa I was watching that despair because I mean, there's three officers standing in front of their classmates, you know, performing, you know, a role play. And there was that moment when you and I talked and then you step back in, and I remember the moment so vividly, and I think what you just said was so important is that connection that happened because in that moment, All of her defenses melted all of your, like you said, the law enforcement side of you kind of melted in that moment and it wasn't a kumbaya moment.

It was a moment that she felt heard, she felt seen and she felt understood because as soon as that came out of your mouth, I saw her face drop down and she almost got emotional and then she kind of, she diverted her eyes to me like, oh my God. Like, it was almost like her shoulders [00:13:00] slumped in that moment.

It was, it was such a real moment. And I think that's a thing that was so odd that it transcended the role play. Of what you were talking about that it's like, I get how this person, like, I can feel how this person feels and that person felt this person feels how I feel. And in that moment, that's what we look at in Motivational Interviewing of where resistance or discord completely washes the way or dissipates.

Because now it's not a tension moment. Now it's a, a massive ambivalence moment. And I think that to me is what's so fascinating the way you deconstruct that of looking at, with all the violence. There's health and safety that are not Motivational Interviewing moments. Compliance is compliance for, for officer safety, for civilian safety, for victim safety, all those things that that's just fundamental from a triage perspective, but then there's this, are there moments where that, resonance with two people can happen and the, the tension starts to melt away a bit. And I think that, to me, it there's just something that happened that moment. That was just, it [00:14:00] was fascinating to watch because it was, it was a moment. I mean, it wasn't a role play. It was a moment that happened there.

**Steve Wohl:** Yeah. You know, and, and, and you're exactly right. You know, I've been in, in real case situations where we we've been negotiating with people who are either suicidal, who, are, homicidal or have committed crimes and now

have become, they've kind of come to the end of their rope of what they're gonna do.

And. You know, it, it takes a while to build that rapport. Like you talk about, um, a lot of times you can throw training and, and you can think back of all the things you've done, the steps here, here's what I need to do. But at that, that time, all that is kind almost out the window. It's almost incongruent.

It's it's yes. You've gotta find. That connection. And I think that's where Motivational Interviewing comes into place. You can you learn those steps to build that connection and, and then, then it becomes not negotiator person in crisis. It becomes two people, people looking to working together to, have a great outcome versus us against them, them [00:15:00] against me.

Yes. That type of mentality. And in, in the training situation, I think you nailed it when, when, um, it was almost like all three of us at the same time went. Oh, there it is. We very exactly what it, oh, that right there. What I, what I just said broke down the barriers with Jan who is now willing to talk to me, let me in a little bit.

Which brings me closer to her, which builds that connect, you know, that connectivity that we need so that we can get her, um, the help that she's needing at that time, even though it's role play. This goes on in, in real life every day in law enforcement and over, over my, uh, about 14 years as a negotiator and a team commander, I, I listened and saw this on a regular basis where we have the initial.

Button up heads, not, not, you know, negotiator, I'm here to help you, you know, you're gonna let me help you type of thing to. Building that rapport building that, that friendship almost to [00:16:00] where it's like, this is what, this is how we want it to go to help you. And once, once you have that and you have that relationship, um, it tends to, to work in our favor because we're able to, to really show them that we're there to help and get them the help that they need.

And that this is a temporary crisis. Not something they can't get over. And that's our goal.

**Casey Jackson:** You know, the, the one thing that I want to, you know, I'm gonna own just my own bias. Um, my previous bias against law enforcement, I was never anti law enforcement ever. I mean, it's just, that's just not me, but I

was, I just had the same stereotypes that some people have, you know, just like, you know, they're just cops, they're just, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

And even when I was asked to do the initial trainings, I had my own hesitancy around that about, I, I just don't understand the point. This is gonna get bastardized in a way that, you know, they're saying they're using Motivational Interviewing and it's just gonna be another tactic, um, to do what they do. One of the things that.

That was so profound [00:17:00] for me in my depth of understanding of how complex and it's still, so I'm still so naive in it, but that really helped my understanding in a different way is the number of things that you have to assess on scene in microseconds that you are a hundred percent accountable to, to the victim, to the perpetrator and to the community.

Like microsecond things that you're accountable for and that your profession hangs on these microseconds, um, your career hangs on these microseconds and good point. And I'm in what's that, that is such a good point. Like I've never really thought about that, but wow. That is a lot that your brain is having to process due.

In microseconds, microseconds just had to say that. And, and Tammy, that's what, that's what we wanna talk about this from an Motivational Interviewing perspective, because you think of when we're doing advanced advanced trainings and we're doing skill building and people just keep talking about God, am I so hard because we've got all these things going through our [00:18:00] brain.

And so I take that MI brain of mastery or proficiency in Motivational Interviewing and all these things we're paying attention to linguistically. Of language that we're paying attention to. Now you take that and now you put everything environmentally that you have to pay attention to. Did you see somebody just got outta the car over there?

Are they like the view of a horizon from law enforcement, from one particular officer who's exceptional in what they do? They're picking up on environmental cues, like on regions, of the, of the, the scene out in front of you, like every little thing that flins or moves their brain absorbs that and thinks in those microseconds from a health and safety perspective.

And now you're trying to think about linguistics about where's the sustained talk. Where's the change talk. Where's the resistance talk at the same time. So



you have to be. In this moment is what we expect from an Motivational Interviewing perspective. And that's, that's negating everything in the environment that involves all these other people around at [00:19:00] the same time, from a health and safety microseconds that they have to pay attention to.

So that was for me, once I was able to kind of integrate from an empathetic way of looking at it from a law enforcement perspective and why. There was initially an initial kind of pushback against you. I don't think that works for the world we work in because there was a lot of that pushback.

There continues to be that pushback in law enforcement at times. Like, yeah, that that's not part of our world. I think that's for me was the high empathy side of going. My brain can barely comprehend what they have to assess when they arrive on scene and not only what they assess when they arrive on scene, every microsecond of environmental factors that are going on, that they have to make decisions about that are being filmed.

We can't get people to, to audio tape themselves, to submit, to get feedback from motivational interviewing law enforcement officers have cameras strapped to them. They're measuring and monitoring every single thing they do. Behavioral health people wouldn't allow that to happen because they don't wanna be monitored at that level.

For liability.

**Steve Wohl:** [00:20:00] Yeah. It, yeah. Enforcement, our clinical, our clinical settings are so different. Right. I mean, when you're dealing with somebody in a clinical setting, it's, it's pretty sterile. It's pretty controlled. Um, we don't, we don't get that luxury always. Right. We right there, I mean, like you said, Casey, we're, we've got body cams.

Most everybody has, uh, you know, cell phones being recorded. Um, and, and you, and you kinda nailed it on the head in that we're, we're. Our brains are slicing things up all the time of where's the threat, where is, um, I, I need to make this connection and help this person. And they're they're whether they're in crisis, whether whatever is going on, but if I've got all these other stimuli around me that I'm trying to, um, Take in and, and make a decision on.

And a lot of times it's seconds, is that person grabbing that gun to assault me, or is that person grabbing the gun to get rid of it? Because he doesn't want to have a deadly encounter or bad situation. And my brain is trying to figure that out in

[00:21:00] seconds, milliseconds, uh, of what's going on. And so it's, um, it's, it's funny to, to, to.

Have friends in the law enforcement side, which I do, of course. And it's funny to have friends that are non-law enforcement when we can be out. And I see things or observe things or. See suspicious activity together as a group and, and people don't even see that. That's just not how they're trained. And, and I'm not, I'm not trained like a, a physician or an educator to, to look at ways to, to teach and to do, and to do this surgery and to do that, my brain is, is taught a different way.

And so a lot of times, It's, uh, it, it, how we, how we train each other and how we work is incongruent. It just, it's just, it is what it is. Um, and our environments are so different, so yeah, it's, I, I can see how you would. View, especially with the media and everything law enforcement and how, you know, it's just my way or the highway.

And, and what's shown on TV when, as you know, now dealing with, [00:22:00] um, C I T and, and the classes we put through, and some of the, our, our officers, especially here in Spokane are some of the most well trained to deal with people in crisis. We do this through repetitive reality based training and bringing in, uh, professional people like Casey and to do these type of things, um, so that we can teach them.

So we have the favorable outcomes. So we, in that millisecond, we make, hopefully make that right choice and potentially save somebody versus way.

**Casey Jackson:** That's what I think is so interesting too. You know what I like, what you talked about, the, yeah. We, when you think of fifties and sixties, they were opposite into the spectrum.

And now this, this merging, you know, I've, I've done some of the CodeDeploy I've done ride-alongs uh, because I wanted to get that perspective as well, too. And what's what was helpful for me is because that became so much more clear. There is. Always gonna be a delineation between law enforcement and behavioral health, [00:23:00] as there should be.

There's a delineation, you're not social workers, that's not your job, but the community safety and peace officer side of it very much starts to blend there. And I think that's the part of the ven diagram. That's so fascinating where these promising practices are starting to converge, because what I think of is when I would do the ridealongs.

It's like, oh my God. Motivational Interviewing would work so well in this domestic violence situation, like this would be like, , you're just, if you had knew this, you would, this would be such an excellent outcome. And there's other scenes that I, that we arrived on that I'm thinking, yeah, this is not relevant. I is not relevant here.

This is a health and safety. This is a community. This is just, it's not an Motivational Interviewing moment, but the merger, like my ultimate moment of merger is of when, in those seconds, when they're reaching for the gun, that the brain is so well trained that you're listening to the language and being able to assess the language from a resistant, sustained change, [00:24:00] talk perspective, and, and trying to, to weave more of that in the complexity that I look at with that is not only are you, my brain goes into watching Steve juggle.

18 balls. What he normally is doing is juggling 18 balls. And now I'm throwing eight more in there when you're thinking from an Motivational Interviewing lens of linguistics and how you track linguistics. So is it impossible? No. Is it something to try to strive towards? I think that's where I get excited and get fascinated on this hybrid of, and, and is that gonna have an impact on outcomes?

Because it's not my attachment to everybody learning Motivational Interviewing cause it's not my attachment. My attachment is to better outcomes for. um, and if, if even three of those balls or two of those balls get thrown into that 18 balls that law enforcement juggles, and there's two or three Motivational Interviewing components that get tossed in there.

And all of a sudden use of force is reduced by another 40% or, you know, that, that these situations that, that [00:25:00] more often not end in. You know, in violence or death, that those are reduced greatly because of this interaction that we can measure and look at. That's my obsession with what you're talking about.

These ends of the spectrum. We're actually starting to merge in the middle. And I think that cross section with these evidence based practices, even beyond motivational interviewing mean, obviously the law enforcement gets, you know, engages in that to me is just. To be part of that history that's being written right now to me is just mind blowing.

**Steve Wohl:** Yeah. You know, you said something that, uh, I wanted to, to touch on Casey, um, and that your, in your mindset, your outcome is to, is to make sure it's safe for all, for all people, right. That's law. Enforcement's.

Number one outcome. Exactly. We're all on the same page. It's a matter now having the tools and the abilities, um, to, to have that safe outcome.

And in law enforcement, we're just putting those situations more than the, the, the normal person is right. The, the guy who's driving, the tanker truck or delivering, you know, groceries. We're just putting those situations more and more, [00:26:00] but we have the same outcome. We want the same things. And that's why we do the trainings and the, and, and, um, do the things we do.

And, and you're just in a, an environment where you get to see that more, especially with the body cams that, that you see. Um, yes. And you get to see the work that our guys and gals do out there really to get the same outcome that you would want, that they would want. Yes. Their mother would want, you know, yes.

**Casey Jackson:** And the thing that I can look at Steve objectively, or as objectively as possible is the missteps that I see in law enforcement from a Motivational Interviewing perspective are no different than the missteps that I see from physicians or nurses or mental health professionals or addiction specialists that submit audio tapes to us.

Like the missteps are the missteps because they're learning a new skill set. So I think that's the thing that's fascinating too. It's just like, cuz I get my own writing reflex of, oh my gosh, this could be handled so much differently. It's no different than when John and I are coding tapes and listening to audio sessions of clinicians in practice going, oh my gosh, that was just such a major missed opportunity.

Like [00:27:00] this could be a different outcome if you had these skill sets mastered a bit, a bit more. So I think that's also. Coming together merging of it, of, um, you know, of these evidence based practices that we know about. Yeah, for sure. What I wanna, what I think would be helpful thinking about, I think because of where the chaos in the world, so much of the chaos of the world is, and, and so much around guns and gun safety right now and, and violence.

Is there a, is there a situation you can think of that you've been in. That you know, was very, obviously, you know, this is what we do from a hostage negotiations. This is what we do from a law enforcement perspective. But in retrospect, you've, you've wondered like kind of what I just wonder if I ran it through an Motivational Interviewing lens, was there are the things we could have added to the equation.

What I wanna say for people are listening the way that I look at this, and the way I wanna ask this to Steve is not from what we did wrong or what we could have done better. There's a quality assurance that we know that what was done was [00:28:00] right. And then continuous quality improvement for. I think for any human or any behavioral professional is we hit the mark where we needed a mark.

And then how do we wanna take it the next level? That's my curiosity for you. Is there a scene you can think of or a situation we're in there? It's like, yeah, I know we handled it well per protocol. And then when I run my brain through an MI lens, I wonder if I had a different skill level or if it was a little higher in MI, I wonder if this part of it could have been different.

Is there anything you can think of?

**Steve Wohl:** Yeah. One, one comes to mind, um, that I think it happened, I'd have to look at the tape, but maybe 2017, 2018, we had a long drawn out negotiation with a gentleman in crisis who had a gun and he had about, I think there was two women and a child or a couple children, um, inside this home, on, north Crestline up here in Spokane and this, this was an all night negotiation.

We felt like we really, we would, we would, as I look back and listen to the, the tapes we negotiated, we, we really went through [00:29:00] everything that we, um, could to, to get this guy, um, to, to give, you know, give himself up so that we could get the people inside out safely. And then all of a sudden it would take a left turn and we'd be back to ground zero, and then we'd have to build that back up.

And we just didn't know if he was playing with us. Um, what was going on? And mind you, we we'd, we'd been on there for a long time. So we had tactical units there. Um, I was the, uh, both the SWAT and hostage commander at that time. Um, and so I was in a command post and I could listen, I had my negotiators, I could, I could listen to what, what the conversations were.

Um, and you would feel like you would, you would start making ground. I mean, he was just still, resistant to, to everything and we just couldn't get it there. Um, ultimately in the end, I think after about 11 or 12 hours, Um, the decision was made, where we ended up doing an explosive breach and going in tactically and getting him in custody.

When we, when we had that window, we, we could view into the house and we knew he was, um, away from everybody. And, and it was a tactical situation

that ended, [00:30:00] uh, beautifully. We got him in custody, nobody was hurt. Um, ended up, it was a great outcome, but I look back and I think could we have. Talked him out of the house or really gotten to him, through the Motivational Interviewing piece that we didn't, where did we miss?

Where potentially had we gone in and something bad happened. He took his own life, whatever, any negative outcome we would've looked back and said, okay, what could we have done different in this situation? Great outcome. The tactical team, the negotiators, every, everybody down to the decision of, of making the decision to go.

Um, it was done. But ultimately at that time, when it falls on, on my shoulders is the tactical commander to say, okay, you've got the, the green light to go. We're gonna make this go. If it, if it ends bad, um, the, you know, we're gonna look back and say, what could we have done different?

This turned out great. But I still, we look at that as a failure as in, we couldn't talk him out of that house and had to, had to [00:31:00] go in there, um, by, you know, tactical means. And so I always wonder, could, could we have done something different, to have him come out peacefully, give up, then we get those people out safely.

Um, and we take away any chance that there would be, um, a, a bad outcome. And so that, that probably one comes to mind more than anything on that. Casey.

**Casey Jackson:** I think this is a perfect way for us, this a, a perfect topic kind of to, to wind down with, but I actually wanna spend a bit, some time here with it is I think, because I've seen and listened to so many of the hostage negotiation.

Videos. Um, and this I'm gonna lay this out ahead of time, just as people are listening is I'm not going from, I think this is right. Or, or from a righteous perspective. This is just from my observation from looking from a pure Motivational Interviewing lens. Um, so it's not a right or wrong thing. I noticed. So many people, when I've done trainings for law enforcement, they said, you've gotta read, never split the difference with Christopher Vos.

Like, you've gotta read it. You've gotta [00:32:00] read it. So I actually finally read the book and, and I can see that mindset from a, from a negotiator, like, you know, international negotiator perspective of this is what we train on these

concepts. What's really interesting to me is exactly what you said about the timeframe.

And then I look at the timeframe of the officers that I've trained. And why is it so truncated? You know, it, it's the level of cred. Well, we're still talking life and death on some with suicidality and some of the videos that I watch, um, some of, some of the host negotiations I've had lately. But in those hostage negotiation tactics so much is about building relationship, building, relationship, building, relationship, whatever you can do to get that engagement or that connection and build relationship and what I watch in the videos.

And, and I think this I'm gonna pair with the experience that you and Jan had in that role play. The difference building relationship works to a point to the person you're talking to goes, wait a second. This is bullshit. You don't care about me. You're a fucking. And then all of a sudden it [00:33:00] backtracks again, and then you have to get that.

No, no, no, no, no, no. You know, I used to play baseball when I was a kid too, you know, my dad smacked me around, you know, and you know, you know, it's people have been through that. So I hear those let's relate. Let's relate. Let's relate. Which in motivation for me in motivational learning talk is the potential for resistance increases exponentially.

When it's between two people, when it's like, this is my experience, this is my experience. And all of a sudden, it's wait, you can have my experience because you're a cop, you know, you're law enforcement. And then all of a sudden it. It falls apart again, and then you have to build that back and then it's like, okay, somebody has to take team in and take over in that 11 to 12 hours, you know, and see if you can get a better, well, he has a better connection with them.

The difference when I look through an Motivational Interviewing lens is that is not an expression of empathy. That's a self-centered conversation. You're talking about yourself in relationship with the individual who has the gun. and there's a chance for, to get connections, but it literally is throwing spaghetti at the wall to see which is gonna stick, which, one of us is gonna get the best connection with him.

And I had connection with him. I just lost it. And I, and I [00:34:00] listened to those conversations. And when I look from an MI lens it's, and again, this is not the way everyone in Motivational Interviewing. All I trainers train it this way, but the way I train it is that it's not about building relationship. It's about people feeling deeply heard and understood.

And it's that transcendent moment that you talked about with you and Jan, that it was Steve and Jan. It wasn't Lieutenant wall and, you know, CEO, Jan TA Moto. It was these two human beings in a moment that were like, oh my God, I feel heard and seen and understood. That's different than relating to someone. And so much in host negotiations.

What I see is this, how do we relate? How do we relate? What's the, what's the catch? What, where's the hook in there when I'm thinking about, you know, the never split the difference, thought of it. It's where do I find the hook? Where do I find the hook? Where do I find the hook in motivational interviewing what it is is when do I get inside their world view to the place that they forget, that it's me, that they're talking to.

And now they're talking out loud about their own brain and their own ambivalence. and, and as soon as I hear in law enforcement, in those moments where they hear the [00:35:00] ambivalence, they wanna jump in and fix it and solve it. We can help you with that, come out here and we'll talk about it. And it's like, and then all of a sudden it's like, fuck you.

I don't wanna come out and I'm not gonna talk about it. And now of a sudden we lost them again. That, so that example of me, I think, is such a perfect example. When my, my brain looks through the law enforcement lands and the MI lands. And I think, gosh, these are those. These are those. Very narrow corridors, where I think that you can see this merger happening as those skill sets continue to increase.

And like I prefaced with, I'm not saying it's right or wrong, but I mean, my Motivational Interviewing brain goes, okay, there's the moments. Those, those moments that are, you know, 12, 13 hours are ones that I think could be reduced with those, the person coming out saying, I don't wanna harm myself. I've got, this is so outta control.

What am I thinking? And almost having that dialogue outside of his head to be able to see himself and go, I love my children. I don't want to end their lives. I don't want my life ended. Like I just want this situation resolved, but it feels like there's no option to have this resolved, to have his brain, to be able to get his [00:36:00] thoughts out of his head.

So it's not so trauma informed in his own brain that he can get it outta there. And it's like, okay. There is where that would be a fascinating mastery. To watch that next evolution happen. So, and again, that's purely from, in my brain, not from a law enforcement brain, right?



**Steve Wohl:** Yeah. You know, and, and I think we have to realize there are some situations, uh, where the, the person in crisis or the, the suspect, um, doesn't want help.

And, and we, and we've seen that where they're, intelligent. They can play the game or it's just no matter, they know the. No matter what you can throw everything at 'em. I could bring Casey to them and have him, you know, do Motivational Interviewing and, and, and deal with that ambivalence.

And Casey's not gonna get the, the outcome that we want because that person has made up that decision. Luckily, The majority of the time we can, but I think you're spot on Casey in that there are times I, I remember clearly a time on the Monroe street bridge, where I was talking with a, a gentleman who was wanting to jump off the bridge.

I was there and I was, I was talking to him, [00:37:00] um, and I was trying to relate and, and get that hook into him to, to get him to help. Cuz all I wanted was him to get off that bridge and get him to the hospital and get him. But I didn't have that relationship with him. And we switched out in that situation.

I switched out with another negotiator at the time. His name was John O'Brien, uh, who, you know, Casey you've worked with and up. Yes, yes. And he, and he, he related to him on a different level than I could. And now is that, does that mean I did something wrong maybe, or maybe it just was, I didn't have that connectivity with him where John came in and I remember clearly them talking about their Irish backgrounds.

That's where it started. And then it became very similar backgrounds, very similar upbringings of all these different things. Um, and we ended up getting him off the bridge and, and John did a, a masterful job getting him off the bridge where I just couldn't get, I couldn't get that connection. Um, that John got with him.

And that's, what's great about, um, you know, having multiple negotiators is somebody might have that Motivational Interviewing moment where they look at it and then that [00:38:00] training kicks in and it. Connects like it did with Jan and Steve, like it did with John and this, this, uh, gentleman. Um, yeah. And, and so in the end, it not everybody's is going to want to get the help or, put up a, you know, to, to break down those walls and let us in.

Um, but. If we can, if we can increase that amount every year, then it's a win. And that's kind of our goal, absolutely. Here at the Spokane police department

and, and, and nationally in law enforcement, our goal should be always to have those positive outcomes and whatever it takes, training wise, just learning from past mistakes.

We're human. We're gonna make mistakes. How can we be better next time? That's that's kind of, my mantra is how can we train and be better next?

**Casey Jackson:** You know, Steve, and the point that you made that not only that, which I think is just a, for me, it's just so good to capture this conversation. Cause I think it's absolutely vital that we have these kind of conversations.

It's also the piece of the way that. I think it's so clear when we have these [00:39:00] conversations to understand where does Motivational Interviewing work and when does it not work? When is it not appropriate? And, and even what you had just said, if there, my, what I always tell people in training, if there is 0.00000 ambivalence motivation, we won't work.

My nutty little brain is if there's even 0.1, Ambivalence somewhere in their brain. I'm rubbing my hands together, going, I wanna get access to that part of the ambivalence and see, can I tease that out more? And that's why I wanna reinforce what you had said. If there is 0.0000 ambivalence, it's a done deal in their brain and this is just cat and mouse.

Um, and they know what the end is gonna be. Motivational Interviewing is not a tool. It's not an effective tool. It doesn't work in those situations. It's not indicated and it doesn't work the exploration to see if there's even 0.1. Ounce of ambivalence inside of their brain is that, that to me is such a high level of trying to exercise that and tease that out to see if it exists.

But if it's zero ambivalence, motivation doesn't work because their behavior is [00:40:00] in alignment with what their values or their goals are. There's nothing and that's, and that's when I train people and I tell them, then what do we have left? If it's not behavior change, then we have to shift to compliance.

If there's no ambivalence. And to me, this is it's like, that's why, you know, there's this, this marriage, but this separateness between Motivational Interviewing and law enforcement, that there is a separateness, there's still two separate entities. But there can be this kinda marriage between the two where it's like, God, there's a good working relationship.

And there's times that, you know, I'm this parent and you're this parent, um, that's just the way life is. Um, and I think it's the same in law enforcement when

there's zero ambivalence going on, our, our default is compliance then as it should be. Um, yeah. And ambivalence and we should be working towards behavior change.

**Steve Wohl:** Yeah. You know, and, and it's when those access crosses, like we talked about when it crosses, like it did with Jan and I, or other situations I've been on. That's when it's like, oh boy, that this, this, this is if we can do this every single time, we need to replicate this. Yes. This, this works, you know? Like you said, there are some [00:41:00] people that it's not gonna work. There's no ambivalence whatsoever. There's none. Right. Um, but when you, when you use it, whether you in a training environment, use it on, on a training person, or you use it at home with your children or your spouse and you see how it works and you go, wow, this stuff's cool. This is magic, right.

It is magic. That's where it goes. And then. Then yeah. Then you teach your wife and then she starts using it on you and it's oh, it's terrible. I give in and it's terrible.

**Casey Jackson:** And what's ironic is your behavior still doesn't change, Steve. I'm not, I've got zero ambivalent. thank you so much for, this was just, this was so productive.

I mean, I just, I could do this for hours, but I think this is, yeah, I, I love doing these podcasts, but this one for me is just like, I, this feels really, really good. I'm I'm just glad we were able to, to get this captured. And I want people to be able to hear this. I just think there's so much value right now for people that to listen to this kinda.

**Steve Wohl:** Yeah. I, just thank you guys for, for allowing me to come on and I guess I want everybody to know you, everybody, you include everybody, the in law enforcement in our world, [00:42:00] like you said, there's, there's a lot of distrust and just, you know, media and stuff. Ultimately our goal is to have that happy ending every single time.

And, and we train that way. We, we, that's why we, you know, brought you in and we, that's what we want our goal. Um, we're all on the same page and we're all on the same team. And so it's, it's a matter of, of, uh, putting the right people in the right spots to, to get. You know, the training and the education and to see this stuff succeed.

That's ultimately, um, our goal. I know it's your goal. And so these type of podcasts, these discussions are so needed and so important. So I just appreciate the opportunity and the invitation to come on here.

**Casey Jackson:** Yeah. Yeah. And I appreciate you accepting that. That was it's. It's just been wonderful for me. So thank you for that.

Mm-hmm you bet, right, John.

**John Gilbert:** Well, thank you, Steve so much. There's so many things that I'm not gonna say that I have curiosities about or things that comment on, but I will just say your point. I do wanna bring up, I'd be remiss to not say having multiple negotiators [00:43:00] in. Even emotional intelligences, like level of Casey's emotional intelligence with empathy versus maybe another officer, the difference in life experiences and even cross-cultural things of, of empathy coming in, or another officer relating to another type of a person that, uh, is in.

Um, trauma or something like that. I just really want to give voice to how critical that could be, uh, for anyone listening to this, um, uh, that is dealing with a lot of different situations, different negotiations, different levels of empathy, and really just trying it out and seeing what works for you. So, uh, anyhow, that being said, Steve super educational for me.

I know I learned a lot from you, so thank you for, uh, giving me more empathy into the, uh, into your world. And hopefully everything stays healthy for you and your team and everyone there. And, um, I don't have anything more. Is there anything else for you, uh, Tammy or Casey that you'd like to throw in before we wrap up?

**Tami Calais:** Steve. If [00:44:00] people want to connect with you or the Spokane police department, is there a good way for them to connect with you guys?

**Steve Wohl:** Yeah, you know, I, we've got, uh, our, our public information office unit. We, we, uh, deal with, uh, a lot of request and, and. Connections. And we've got Facebook and got different avenues.

Um, our, our director in charge of that is Julie Humphreys with, uh, the Spokane police department. But we're, we're on, we're on, on the internet, right? So people, we definitely people can reach out to us and, um, we can connect that way and, and we'll continue to, to strive to, to provide the service that, that, that people deserve.

**Tami Calais:** Excellent. Thanks so much, Steve. Thank you very much. Julie said that you, you can find Spokane police by searching at the Spokane PD or Spokane PD on either Facebook or Instagram.

**Casey Jackson:** So thanks, Tammy. Thanks so much, Steve. Thank you. Thank you for listening to the [00:45:00] communication solution podcast as always, this podcast is all about you.

So if you have questions, thoughts, topic, suggestions, ideas, please send them our way at [casey@ifioc.com](mailto:casey@ifioc.com). That's [casey@ifioc.com](mailto:casey@ifioc.com) for more resources, feel free to check out [IFIOC.com](http://IFIOC.com) . We also have a public Facebook group called motivational interviewing every day. We have an amazing blog and we have lots of communication tips on our website.

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