

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department  
Dealing With Complacency in the Dispatch Center  
"Gatekeepers" Outline

**I. Administration and Paperwork**

- A. Housekeeping
  - 1. Bathrooms
  - 2. Specific information for facility security if applicable
  - 3. Breaks
  - 4. Parking if applicable
- B. Paperwork
  - 1. Instruct Students to fill out their name tent
  - 2. Hand out P.O.S.T. course roster
  - 3. Collect Travel Reimbursement Request (TRR) forms

**II. Introductions and Expectations**

- A. Introductions
  - 1. Students
  - 2. Facilitator
- B. Expectations
  - 1. What do the students expect to get out of the class
  - 2. What do you (the instructor) expect to impart to the class
    - a. Course overview
    - b. Course goals
- C. Learning Activity & Student Assessment #1
  - 1. Students will be divided into groups of 2 and will be provided specific questions which seek to gain insight into the what, who, where, why and how as related to the other student they are paired with.

2. Students will prioritize the information they have obtained based upon the answers received.
3. Students will apply critical thinking skills in prioritizing the calls. Students will have to remove one question (what, who, where, why, or how) in the process, to experience the act of filtering information received.
4. Students will teach back what they learned about their colleague and introduce them to the class, revealing the information they chose to prioritize and filter, as well as the student's expectations for the course.
5. The exercise simulates the experience of dispatchers as they act as gatekeepers during real world conditions in the communications center

### **III. Gatekeeper**

#### **A. Definition**

1. The process through which information is filtered for dissemination, whether for publication, broadcasting, the internet, or some other mode of communication. (Miriam-Webster)
2. A person who controls access

#### **B. Learning Activity & Student Assessment #2**

1. Students will remain in their original groups of 2 and through discussion identify and evaluate how they performed as a gatekeeper during the previous activity and assessment.
2. Students will identify what questions they removed and why they removed them demonstrating an understanding of the concepts of gatekeeping.
3. Students will discover through discussion how their role as dispatchers is directly correlated to the role of gatekeeper.
4. Students will teach back what they learned about their role as a gatekeeper and how it affects their job performance.

### **IV. Communications Cycle**

#### **A. Sender**

1. Formulates
  2. Decodes
  3. Can be a person or organization
- B. Message
1. Encoded
  2. Filters
- C. Channels of Communication
1. Verbal
  2. Telephone
  3. Voicemail
  4. Email
  5. Online
  6. Letters
  7. Media
- D. Receiver
1. Assigns meaning
  2. Decodes
  3. Formulates
- E. Feedback
1. Confirming message understood
- F. Noise
1. Distractions
  2. Filters
- G. Case Study Exercise#1 – Language as Gatekeeper
1. Students, working in groups of 4-6, will identify the components of the communications cycle.
  2. Students will distinguish how language influences the meaning assigned to word choice through discussion.

3. Through a group exercise students will discover how their personal biases related to language may influence them as dispatchers in creating a call for service.
4. Students will teach back what they learned about how language influences their decision making as a dispatcher.

## **V. God Complex**

### **A. Definition**

1. An unshakable belief characterized by consistently inflated feelings of personal ability, privilege, or infallibility (Miriam-Webster).

### **B. Traits**

1. Lost in own world
2. Ideas are better than everyone else's
3. Frustration because they are not understood
4. Superiority complex
5. Extremely competitive
6. Looking down on others
7. Compare ourselves
8. Take creations and work too seriously
9. Bad at listening to others
10. Feel unappreciated
11. Justifying their own bad behavior

### **C. Giving Advice**

1. Operating outside of policy
2. Best industry practices
3. Professional knowledge

### **D. Case Study Exercise #2 – Malice**

1. Through discussion students will identify the components of the God complex.

2. Students will examine how characteristics of the God complex influence decision making in the communications center.
- E. Combat God complex
1. Think big picture
  2. Have an open mind
  3. Explain ideas better
  4. Knowledge as a tool to help
  5. Take a step back and think about the scope of things
  6. Aware of the problem and stop comparisons
  7. Accept diversity of thought
  8. Don't take yourself too seriously and keeping perspective
  9. Being open and listening to others
  10. Self-affirmation

## **VI. Dispatch Culture**

- A. Fear
1. Verbal ridicule
  2. Shame
- B. Intimidation
1. Superior attitude amongst peers
  2. Backseat dispatching
- C. Laziness
1. Short cuts
- D. High Achievers
1. Not directed appropriately
- E. Filtering Information
1. May lead to compromised safety issues
    - a. Citizens
    - b. Sworn personnel

F. Omission of information

1. Premise history
2. Weapon information

G. Liability

1. Department
2. Personal

**VII. Complacency**

A. Definition

1. Self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies.

B. Filtering

1. Preventing information from passing through
2. Personal judgments and biases
3. Policies and procedures

C. Traits

1. Disengaged
2. Stop thinking
3. Don't invest in themselves
4. Take shortcuts
5. Stop making informed decisions
6. Lost passion
7. Disgruntled with current career destination

D. Learning Activity & Student Assessment #3

1. Students, working in groups of 4-6, will identify the traits of complacency.
2. Students will distinguish how filtering information changes the context of calls and may result in the denial of service.
3. Through a group exercise students will discover how the traits of complacency coupled with filtering influence them as call-takers and/or

dispatchers in creating a call for service or dispatching a call for service.

4. Students will teach back what they learned about complacency and filtering.

## **VIII. Tools**

### A. Self-evaluation

1. Self-awareness
2. Fact finding and fact facing
3. Why it is done this way
4. Self-corrective action
5. Channels of effective communication
6. Policy suggestion changes
7. Adherence to policy

### B. Empowerment

1. Renewed commitment
2. Appropriate use of authority

## **IX. Certificates and Course Evaluation**